



August 2001 - Rs. 10/-

CHANDAMAMA



Cape O' Rushes
Page 46

S. Gandhi Art

India is unique.

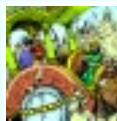
With its many cultures, its many faiths. With the many languages and dialects its many people speak. People of different castes, communities, creed. People with countless differences but a single pride.

Their pride in being an Indian.

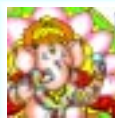
We nurture this pride. For we believe that India is one great nation. A nation with a magnificent heritage that we all share.

CHANDAMAMA

In many languages, a common tradition

**Saga of India**

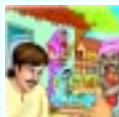
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We had, on behalf of our readers who expressed anxiety, written to the Prime Minister, Shri Vajpayee, wishing him speedy recovery from his recent surgery. His response printed on this page is full of appreciation of and encouragement to the task undertaken by *Chandamama* to provide insights into India's heritage. As we express our gratitude to him, and share the message with our readers, we rededicate ourselves to the objectives of the founders to promote national integration through this multi-lingual magazine. -Editor



प्रधान मंत्री
Prime Minister

New Delhi
June 23, 2001

Dear Shri Reddi,

Thank you for your kind letter dated June 16, 2001 conveying the good wishes of the readers of *Chandamama* for my speedy recovery after the recent knee surgery. I appreciate their warm and affectionate sentiments and reciprocate the same.

I am delighted to know that *Chandamama*, which has mesmerized millions of students with stories drawn from India's rich cultural heritage has successfully re-launched itself in twelve language editions. What has especially gladdened me is that you have also started to publish a Sanskrit edition of the magazine to popularize this ancient but ever-living language, which is the basic source of our culture and philosophical heritage.

I admire your courage and commitment since this must be a difficult task for you. However, knowing that you have the benefit of the collaboration of Sanskrit Bharati in New Delhi, which has been doing commendable work in taking Sanskrit to the masses, I am sure your effort will bear fruits.

The task of providing greater patronage and promotion to Sanskrit has to be shared by the Government as well as non-governmental agencies, especially, the mass media. *Chandamama's* bold effort, therefore, deserves our highest appreciation.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

(A.B. Vajpayee)



Founded by

B. Nagi Reddi and Chakrapani

A Richer Fare

The founding fathers of *Chandamama*, in the wake of the advent of freedom for the country, had aimed at national integration through novel methods.

One was to tell children of India's hoary past and the rich heritage that its seers, sages, saints, and rulers had built up, taking the best of human values closer to the people. Following their methods, the founders also employed stories, supplemented and complemented by tell-tale drawings and pictures, to infuse sublime thoughts in the minds of the readers with a view to making them ideal members of society.

Another way was to bring the readers together by narrating these stories in the language they are familiar with or in which they are comfortable to read, enjoy, and imbibe the messages in them. That is how the several language editions of the magazine were born.

It is only common knowledge that such a stupendous task has several constraints—especially of time. This resulted in many of the features appearing in different languages in batches after translation. Sometimes certain features in one language could not appear in other languages.

With this August issue, we begin an experiment by devoting half the number of pages for common features which will appear in all languages simultaneously. This exercise should also help those who wish to become multilingual with an opportunity to get familiarised with languages other than their mother-tongue.

Our readers can now watch for a richer fare in every issue. And on our part, we look forward to their comments.

Editor : VISWAM

Editorial Advisors : RUSKIN BOND, MANOJ DAS

Consultant Editor : K. RAMAKRISHNAN



This came by e-mail from Roy Varghese:

Your magazine has been a good entertainment for children, but I suggest, please add some more current events and scientific news which will help children for their further development. By doing this, it will not only make the children interested in the magazine, but the parents, too.

This came from Asad Kamal, of Bara Banki (U.P.):

Chandamama is really a good and lessonful book for persons of every age. The language is so impressive. The get-up and coverage is superb. The mode of story-telling is fabulous for school-going kids.

Reader Mathew Varghese, of Nigdi, Pune, has this to say:
I would like to compliment you on the wonderful information provided

through *Chandamama*. The series on *Unsolved Mysteries* fascinate me the most. They leave me awestruck and baffled. Please continue more interesting episodes of *Samaritan Samir*. Also do re-start the series *The Voyages of Ulysses*.

Reader D. Vidyasagar of Vijayawada, who has been reading *Chandamama* for 35 years, finds features like *Born this month* and *Saga of India* very interesting. Stories revolving round environment (*Life flows again*, *Clean sweep*) are useful for children.

G. Trivikram, Cuddapah, writes:

I am an ardent reader of *Chandamama* (Telugu) and occasionally peruse the English edition, in which I find *Saga of Vishnu* running fast. Please slow it down. In *Chandamama*, we usually see two kinds of ghosts—naughty ghosts which enjoy teasing human beings and amuse the readers, and the other helping mortals overcome their trouble/sorrow, or lending a hand in achieving something and teaching villains a lesson. Please keep up this tradition, and keep the kind of vampires as in 'Midnight Fiesta' (June) away from the pages of *Chandamama*. The last sentence clearly suggests that they killed Dhanraj. This is not acceptable to me.

**A PICK FROM OUR
MAIL BAG**



Reader D.H. Lalita from Tenali liked the June issue. She looks forward to seeing more of such features and stories with "quality" pictures, which can divert the attention of children from TV to *Chandamama*.

Muranjan Jui, student of IX standard, of Girgaum, Mumbai, writes thus:

Chandamama provides everyone, irrespective of age, enjoyment, education, and entertainment.



Coromandel



The best blended cement

Ruskin Bond

Faraway places

Anil and his parents lived in a small coastal town on the Kathiawar Peninsula where Anil's father was an engineer in the Public Works Department. The boy attended the local school, but as his home was away from the town, he hadn't the opportunity of making many friends.

Sometimes he went for a walk with his father or mother, but most of the time they were busy—his mother in the house, his father in the office—and as a result he was usually left to his own resources. However, one day Anil's father took him down to the docks, about two miles from the house. They drove down in a car, which they took right up to the pier.

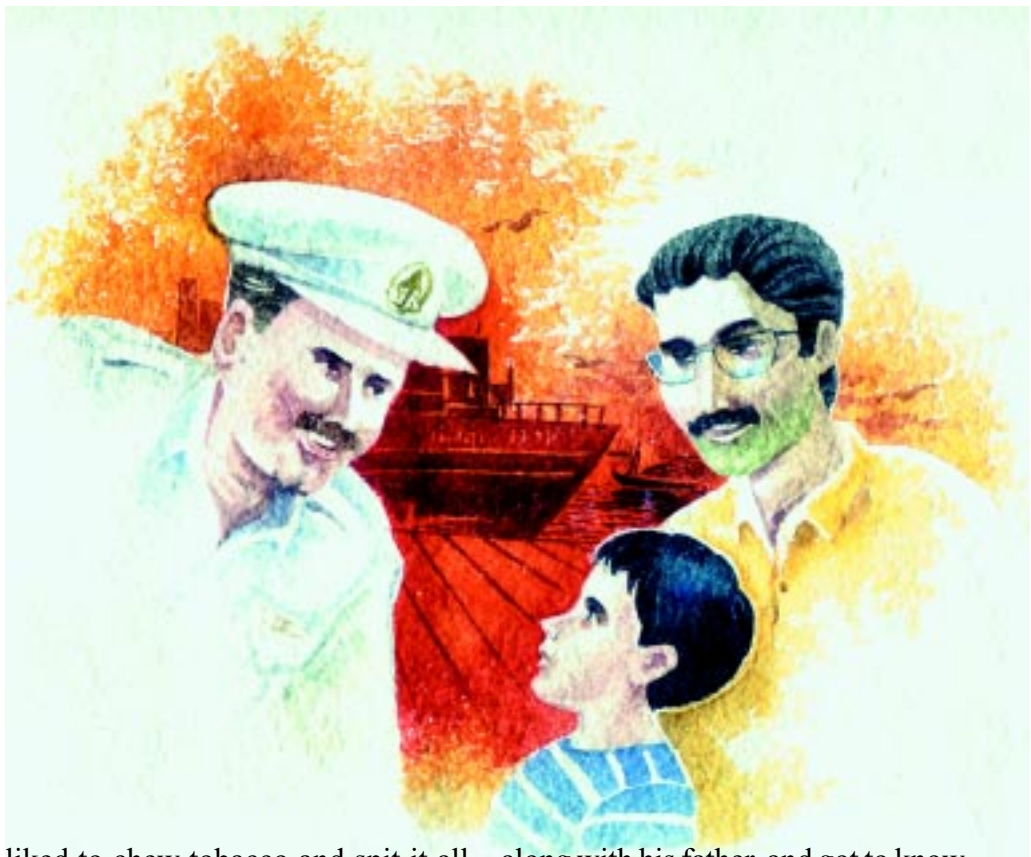
It was a small port, with a cargo steamer in dock, and a few fishing vessels in the harbour. But the sight of the sea and the ships put a strange longing in Anil's heart.

The fishing vessels plied only up and down the Gulf. But the little steamer, with its black hull and red and white funnel held romance, the romance of great distances and faraway ports of call, with magic names like Yokohama, Valparaiso, San Diego, London...

Anil's father knew the captain of the steamer, and took his son abroad. The captain was a Scotsman, Mr. MacWhirr, a very jolly person with a thunderous laugh that showed up a set of dirty yellow teeth. Mr. MacWhirr

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liked to chew tobacco and spit it all over the deck, but he offered Anil's father the best of cigarettes and produced a bar of chocolate for Anil.

"Well, young man," he said to the boy with a wink, "how would you like to join the crew of my ship and see the world?"

"I'd like to, very much, captain sir," said Anil, looking up uncertainly at his father.

The captain roared with laughter, patted Anil on the shoulder, and spat on the floor.

"You'd like to, eh? I wonder what your father has to say to that!"

But Anil's father had nothing to say.

Anil visited the ship once again
Chandamama

along with his father, and got to know the captain a little better; and the captain said, "Well, boy, whenever you've nothing to do, you're welcome aboard my ship. You can have a look at the engines, if you like, or at anything else that takes your fancy."

The next day Anil walked down to the docks alone, and the captain lowered the gang plank specially for him. Anil spent the entire day on board, asking questions of the captain and the crew. He made friends quickly and the following day, when he came aboard, they greeted him as though he was already one of them.

"Can I go with you on your next voyage?" he asked the captain. "I can

scrub the deck and clean the cabins, and you don't have to pay me anything."

Captain MacWhirr was taken aback, but a twinkle came into his eyes, and he put his head back and laughed indulgently. "You're just the person we want! We sail any day now, my boy, so you'd better get yourself ready. A little more cargo, and we'll be steaming into the Arabian Sea. First call Aden, then Suez, and up the Canal!"

"Will you tell me one or two days before we sail, so that I can get my things ready?" asked Anil.

"I'll do that," said the captain. "But don't you think you should discuss this with your father? Your parents might not like being left alone so suddenly."

"Oh no, sir, I can't tell them; they wouldn't like it at all. You won't tell them, will you, captain sir?"

"No, of course not, my boy," said Captain MacWhirr, with a huge wink.

During the next two days Anil remained at home, feverishly excited, busily making preparations for the voyage. He filled a pillowcase with some clothes, a penknife and a bar of chocolate, and hid the bundle in an old cupboard.

At dinner, one evening, the conversation came around to the subject of ships, and Anil's mother spoke to her husband: "I understand your friend, the captain of the cargo ship sails tonight."

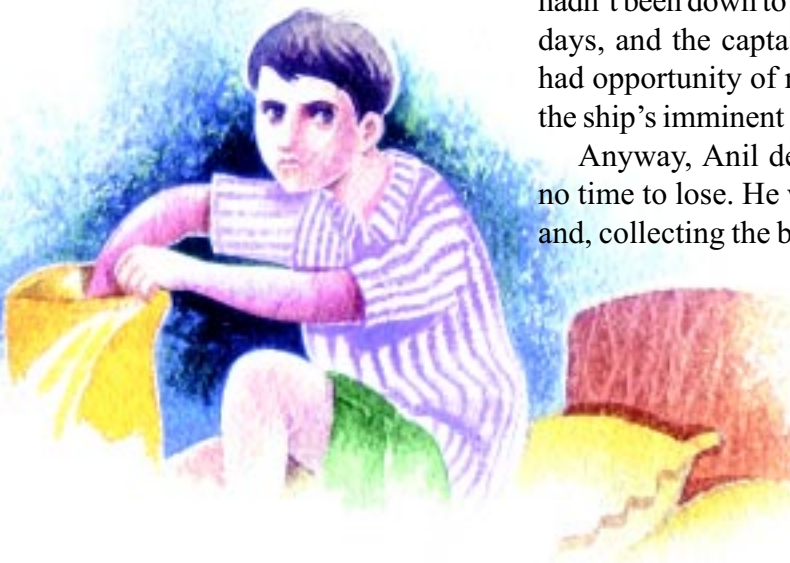
"That's right," said the boy's father. "We won't see him again for some time."

Anil wanted to interrupt and inform them that Captain MacWhirr wouldn't be sailing yet, but he did not want to arouse his parents' suspicions. And yet, the more he pondered his mother's remark, the less certain he felt. Perhaps the captain had mentioned the fact to Anil's parents so that the information could be passed on. After all, Anil hadn't been down to the docks for two days, and the captain couldn't have had opportunity of notifying Anil of the ship's imminent departure.

Anyway, Anil decided there was no time to lose. He went to his room and, collecting the bundle of clothes,

slipped out of the house. His parents were sitting out on the verandah and

Chandamama



for a while Anil stood outside in the gathering dusk, watching them. He felt a pang of regret at having to leave them alone for so long, perhaps several months; he would like to take them along, too, but he knew that wouldn't be practical. Perhaps, when he had a ship of his own...

He hurried down the garden-path, and as soon as he was on the road to the docks, he broke into a run. He felt sure he had heard the hoot of a steamer.

Anil ran down the pier, breathing heavily, his bundle of clothes beginning to come undone.

He saw the steamer, but it was moving. It was moving slowly out of the harbour, sending the waves rippling back to the pier.

"Captain!" shouted Anil. "Wait for me!" A sailor, standing in the bow, waved to Anil; but that was all. Anil stood at the end of the pier, waving his hands and shouting desperately.

"Captain, O Captain sir, wait for me!"

Nobody answered him. The sea gulls, wheeling in the wake of the ship, seemed to take up his cry "Captain, Captain..."

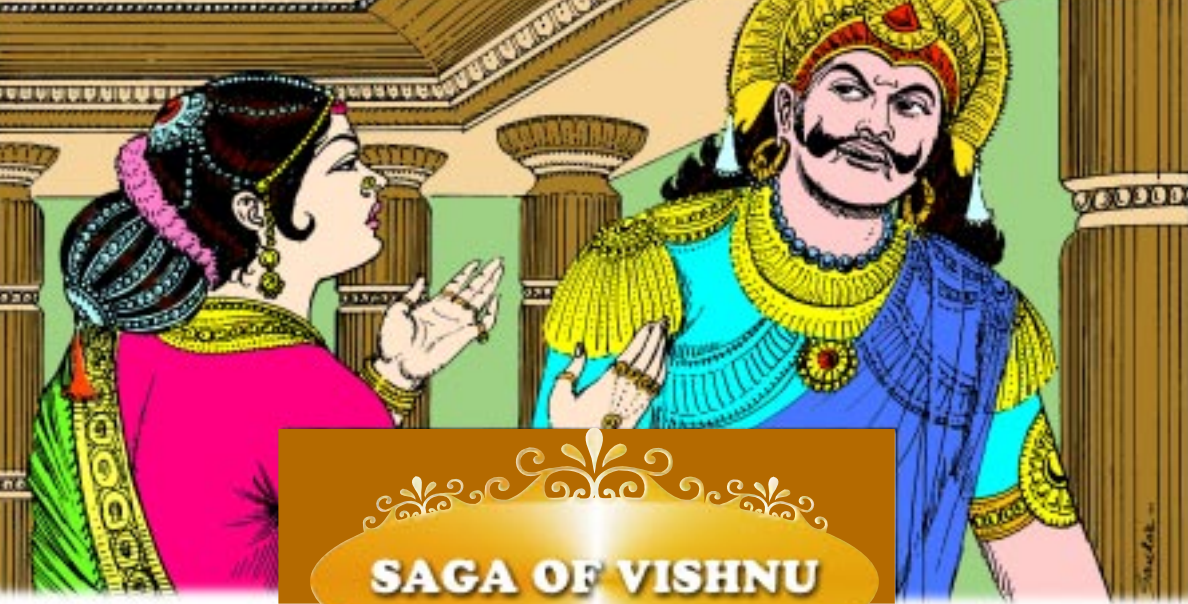
The ship drew further away, gathering speed. Still Anil shouted, in a hoarse, pleading voice. Yokohama, Valparaiso, San Deigo, London, all were slipping away forever...

He stood alone on the pier, his

bundle at his feet, the harbour lights beginning to twinkle, the gulls wheeling around him. "First call Aden, then Suez, and up the Canal." But for Anil there was only the empty house and the boredom of the school room.

Next year, sometime, he told himself, Captain MacWhirr would return. He would be back, and then ?Anil wouldn't make a mistake. He'd be on the ship long before it sailed. Captain MacWhirr had promised to take him along, and wasn't an adult's word to be trusted? And so he remained for a long time on the pier, staring out to the sea until the steamer went over the horizon. Then he picked up his bundle and made for home. This year, next year, sometime... Yokohama, Valparaiso, San Deigo, London!





15. Ayodhya after Rama's return

After the death of Indrajit, one by one all of Ravana's best warriors fell on the battlefield. Finally Ravana had to set out alone to fight with Rama. Even as he set out, Mandodari once again tried to make him see reason. "My lord!" she pleaded. "There's still time; you can even now restore Sita to her husband. Rama is sure to forgive you. Don't set out on this path of evil self-destruction."

Ravana was only enraged. "Even if the Sun and Moon forget their paths in the heavens, Ravana won't budge from his resolve. I don't care what happens to me, but I will not bow before Rama or seek his forgiveness." Then he defiantly mounted his chariot drawn by ten

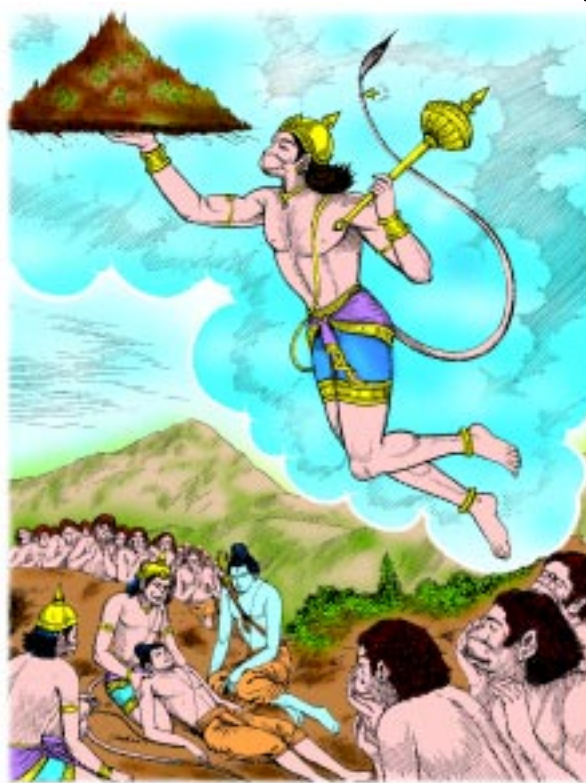
horses and set off to face Rama.

Ravana's first encounter was with Lakshmana, because it was he who had killed Indrajit in a bitter battle. As he recalled that incident, Ravana's fury welled up like a pot of boiling milk. He let loose on Lakshmana the powerful weapon Lord Indra had once given him. It was so powerful that Lakshmana fell down as though dead. No effort seemed to revive him. Finally, Hanuman was sent to bring the Sanjeevani herb from a mountain in the Himalayas. As he flew over the Himalayas, Hanuman looked at all the plants and herbs on the mountain, but he could not identify the Sanjeevani. So he brought the whole

mountain along! A medicine made from the herb revived Lakshmana.

In the meantime, Indra sent a celestial chariot for Rama along with his own charioteer called Mathali. Rama mounted that chariot and went to fight with Ravana. The demon rushed into the fray with a volley of loud battle cries coming out of all his ten heads. There was a frightful battle between the two great warriors.

Ravana rained arrows on Rama with ferocious strength, but Rama dodged them with great dexterity and skill. However skilfully Rama fought, he found it difficult to kill Ravana. The moment he cut off one head, another would grow in its place. When his arrows pierced Ravana's heart or any other vital part of his body, it seemed to do him no harm. The reason was, the source of all of Ravana's strength and life lay hidden in his navel. He could not be



killed by injury to any other part of his body. Vibhishana, who knew this secret, quietly told Rama about it. He then took out the weapon Brahma had given him and aimed it at Ravana's navel. Ravana's huge, mountainous body collapsed at once and he fell dead.



With the death of Ravana, the war came to an end and Rama named Vibhishana the King of Lanka. Then Sita came out of the garden where she had been held captive. Rama welcomed her and told her that he had killed the wicked Ravana who had abducted her. Then he asked her what she wanted to do now. Sita felt hurt; there was no question of what she wanted. She said she would go through a purification by fire.

A fire pit was prepared and Sita stepped into it. The flames lapped around her and Sita was soon hidden by the yellow tongues of the flames for some time. Then the god of Fire, Agni, emerged with Sita in his arms. He told Rama that Sita was as pure as the fire she had entered. Agni then united her with Rama.

Afterwards Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita got into the Pushpakavimana and flew back to

Ayodhya, where there was great rejoicing over the return of Rama.

The people welcomed back Sri Rama. Bharata was eagerly waiting to hand over the crown to Rama, and there was a grand coronation with the pantheon of gods showering their blessings on the royal couple. Rama ruled Ayodhya for a long time

and established what came to be called Ramarajya or the ideal kingdom of Rama.

After a few years, someone in the kingdom spread a rumour doubting Sita's purity and chastity. Rama was upset and felt that as an ideal king, he could not afford to ignore the feelings of his subjects. So he asked Lakshmana to take Sita, who was then pregnant, away to the forest and leave her there. In the forest, she stayed at sage Valmiki's hermitage. In due time, she gave birth to two beautiful boys who were named Lava and Kusha. The twins were



brought up by sage Valmiki and they learnt all the arts and crafts behoving of their age and heritage.

Once there was a drought in Ayodhya. Sri Rama was then advised by his gurus to conduct the Ashwamedha Yagna or the Horse Sacrifice. One day, the twins found the wandering horse in the forests near the

hermitage. They captured the horse and tied it up. Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna soon came there to challenge the captors. They found that they were two young boys. However, they could not free the horse as the boys seemed quite

their equal in warfare. They fell to the arrows sent by the twins and lay unconscious. Finally, Rama himself came to fight the boys who were holding his horse captive. Sage Valmiki and Sita then appeared on the scene and told Rama that the twins were his own sons.

Sita entrusted the boys to Rama and prayed to Mother Earth. "O Mother!" she prayed. "I've entrusted my sons to their father. Now I've no duty left to fulfil on Earth. Please take me back into your bosom."

Immediately, the ground where Sita was standing shook apart and the goddess of Earth, Bhudevi, came up and took Sita into herself.

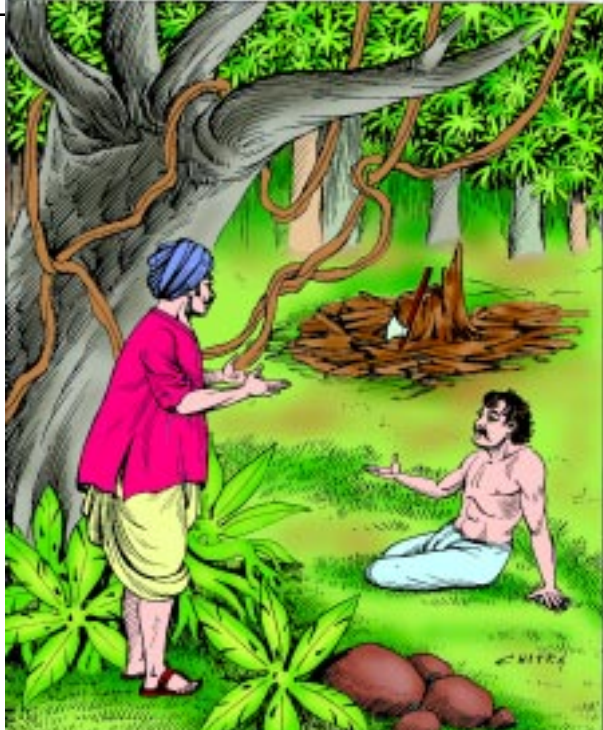
After some time, Rama crowned Lava and Kusha as the kings of Ayodhya and entered the waters of the Sarayu river. Lakshmana once again resumed his original form of Seshanaga, and Bharata and Shatrughna were



once again Vishnu's conch and chakra. Goddess Lakshmi, who had been Sita during the incarnation, was also back in her place.

People believe that Vishnu had assumed the Rama Avatar to show the world who can be an ideal man, son, brother, husband, father, and king.

(To continue)



The Cure for Sleeplessness

Long ago, there was a king who had every reason to be happy. He had a beautiful queen, and lovely looking children. Around the palace was a fine garden. The people of the land were prosperous.

Unfortunately, the king was not happy, because he could not get any sleep at night. He tried several medicines prescribed by famous physicians of his kingdom as well as from the neighbouring lands, but to no avail.

One night, he could not get even a wink. He felt disgusted. As soon as it

was dawn, he dressed as a common man and left the palace through a secret door.

After walking for two hours he entered a forest. The breeze and the cool atmosphere gave him some peace.

Soon he heard a continuous thudding sound. He looked in all directions and saw a man cutting down a tree. 'Poor fellow! How hard he works!' thought the king as he looked on.

A little later the woodcutter stopped, wiped his face, and lay down in a care-free mood. But suddenly he saw the king in disguise and sat up.

"You seem very tired. Better relax for a while," said the king.

"Thank god! For a moment I mistook you as my boss, the supervisor of the forest. He'll whip me if he finds me resting," said the man. He then watched the king closely and said again, "You seem to be a noble man; not accustomed to hard work. Your hands are soft. Look at mine. They are as rugged as the crocodile's back! Are you a tailor?"

"No, I am not," answered the king smilingly, "But you look sleepy. How can you sleep after such hard work?"

"How can I sleep?" the man repeated the words. He appeared amazed at the question. "Why, I could sleep for a week at a stretch if I had had the opportunity!"

“Really?” commented the king, with surprise.

“I’m poor. Unless I work hard, I cannot feed my family. Otherwise, I could sleep to my heart’s content,” mused the man.

“Have you heard how the king suffers from sleeplessness?” asked the king.

“Yes. That surprises me. He must be having a cosy bed and servants to fan him. I don’t understand why he should not get any sleep!” said the man.

The king kept quiet. The man stood up, saying, “I cannot afford to rest any longer. I must finish cutting the other tree before the supervisor comes.”

He then began to hit his axe against a tree. The king kept looking at him for a while, admiringly, and then said: “My friend! Please take rest for a while under a tree. I want to see how you sleep!”

“But didn’t I tell you that I must finish cutting this tree soon?” said the man.

“Don’t worry about that. I’ll work for you,” replied the king and took hold of the axe.

The woodcutter looked grateful. He stretched himself under a big tree and was asleep in no time.

‘How surprising! He does not need any bed, nor a pillow. Yet, how soundly does he sleep!’ said the king to himself and tried his hand at cutting the tree.

Chandamama

In a short while he felt tired and was sweating profusely. He removed his shirt and after a good deal of labour, succeeded in felling the tree.

By now he had hardly any strength to stand. He lay down near the sleeping man and was soon fast asleep himself.

The supervisor reached the spot when it was evening. He was angry to see the worker asleep by the side of a stranger. He gave a kick and shouted, “Get up, you fool!”

The man did not wake up, but the king did. He goggled his eyes at the supervisor and protested, “Why do you shout? Can’t you leave the man in peace?”

“Who are you to tell me what I should or should not do?” challenged the supervisor.



But the king shouted in an agitated tone: "I say, get out of my sight! If you disturb this man, I'll smash your head!"

The supervisor was frightened. He stepped back and, before leaving the spot, murmured, for the sake of his own prestige, "I'll be back soon, sure enough and teach you a lesson!"

He had not gone far when the king's bodyguards came there in search of him. "The king is missing since morning. Have you by any chance seen him?" they asked.

"I haven't seen the king. But here is a fellow who talks like the king of

kings!" replied the supervisor as he pointed his finger at the king.

The bodyguards did not take long to recognise the king even though he was dressed as a commoner. They saluted him and said with concern: "Your majesty! We were dying with anxiety at your sudden disappearance!"

The king ordered them, "Carry this man to the palace in such a way that his sleep is not disturbed. Put him on a bed of silk. When he wakes up, feed him sumptuously and allow him to sleep again. He has taught me the cure for my sleeplessness!"

Not hot enough!

C.Rajagopalachari, one of the grittiest freedom-fighters India has known, was also known for his dry wit. Once he happened to be travelling by train on a very hot, and humid summer day. One of his co-passengers, an Englishman, was obviously uneasy and irritated by the hot weather.



He huffed and puffed and remarked. "It's a very hot afternoon!" "Not hot enough!" said Rajaji coolly. The Englishman was further irked: "Not hot enough! What do you mean?" And Rajaji, smilingly said: "Not enough to keep you gentlemen out of our country!"

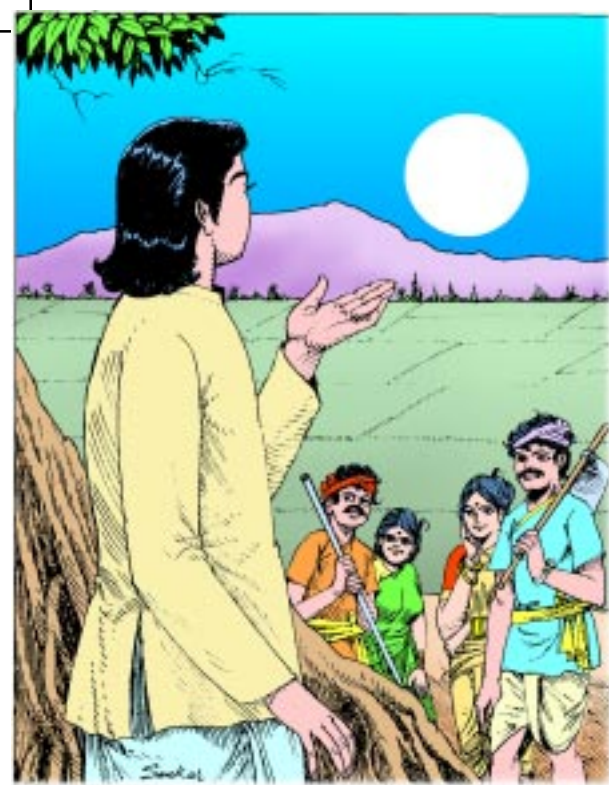


New tales of
King Vikram
and the Vetala

A pundit corrects himself

Once again the determined King Vikramaditya went to the ancient tree where the Vetala was hanging with the corpse. He brought down the corpse, shouldered it yet again, and set off toward the cremation ground. Then the Vetala, who possessed the corpse, spoke to him.

“O king,” he said, “you are really very persistent and patient. Why have you undertaken this difficult task? Again and again I have made you speak and brought you back to this tree. I haven’t allowed you to proceed with your self assigned task. What



and flowers abounded wherever the eye went. The villagers considered the Gosthani divine. Everyone, from the farm labourer to the landowner, participated in a harvest festival which was held every year on the banks of the river.

A wise and great pundit named Jagannath lived in the village. He was a good poet as well, and there was none to match him in the villages nearby. Unfortunately, his wisdom and poetry reached only the few landlords and educated people of the area. The uneducated could not enjoy the joys of his poetry or derive any benefit from his wisdom. Neither was available to them. Jagannath bore no love or regard for the uneducated villagers, and considered them as uncultured creatures without any soul.

makes you go on and on? Be careful about being certain about your goals. One never knows when something will happen to change one's mind. If something does happen to change your attitude and your principles, then you will feel that all this labour was useless. To illustrate my point, I'll now tell you a story." And the Vetala began a new story.

Jagannath's only son had quite the opposite temperament. Their outlooks differed totally. Sridhar was fascinated by the beauties of Nature, and often wandered among the fields, morn till night. He liked to linger at gardens and orchards, and attracted many people whenever he recited poetry. His poetry was easy to understand, and drew to him many who were not well educated. Sridhar took great care to explain

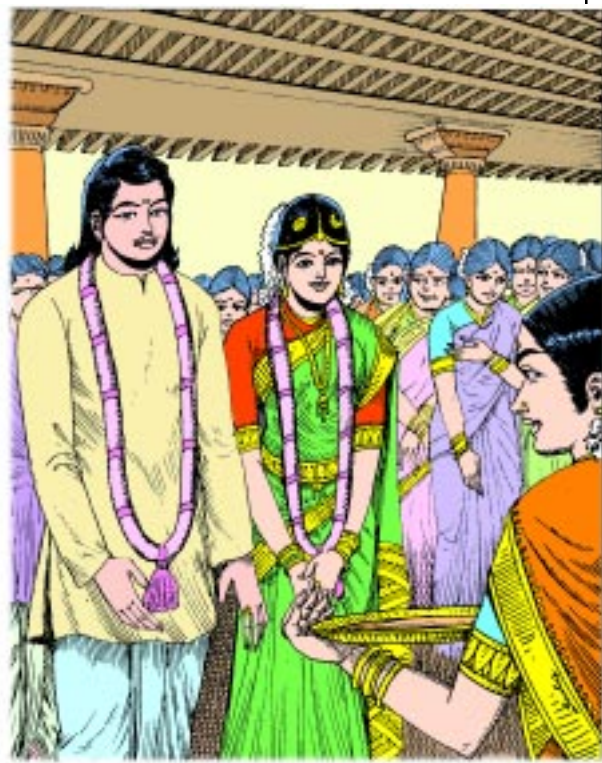
This happened many years ago, in the village of Harithavan, on the banks of the Gosthani river. Harithavan was blessed by Nature with fertile fields which yielded bountiful harvests. Greenery spread everywhere. Shrubbery, fruit trees,

the nuances, whenever necessary, to enhance the comprehension of his audience. Thus their doubts were always removed completely.

Pundit Jagannath disagreed with Sridhar's methods. He tried all means to convince Sridhar, be it by persuasion, advice, or even reprimands. He often used to say, "It is as important for lovers of poetry to have an understanding and perception, as it is for poetry to have meaning. To serve such unread and uncultured people as you do is to insult Saraswati herself. It amounts to throwing slush and garbage at Her. I do not like your intellectual activity. It would be best for you to change, as you will not progress and advance, otherwise."

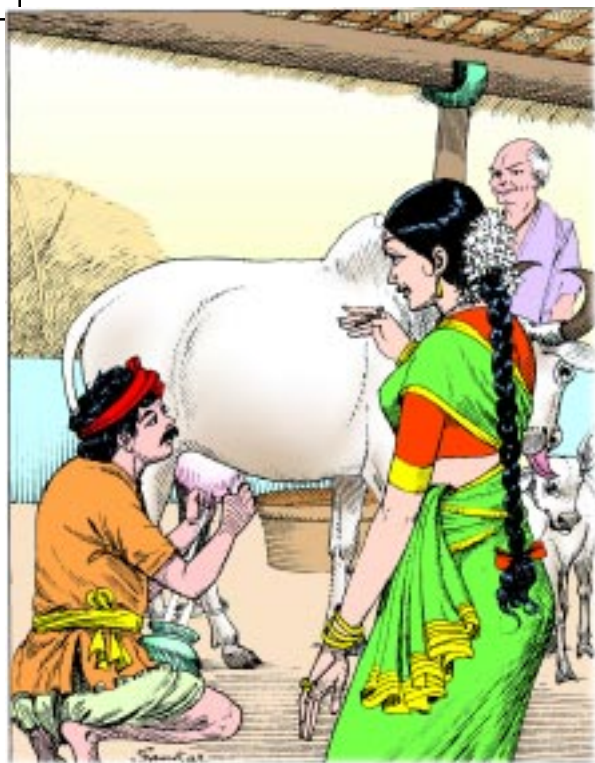
Thus life went on. A time came when a marriage proposal for Sridhar came from Madhvipur, a village far away from Harithavan. The bride, Sharada, was the only daughter of Narayan Bhatt. A very learned man, Narayan Bhatt educated Sharada himself and taught her to read and write.

Pundit Jagannath went to Madhvipur with Sridhar to meet the bride. Sharada was able to give pleasing and appropriate answers to a few questions put to her by



Jagannath, and he was convinced that she would be a suitable daughter-in-law. Sridhar, too, liked her pleasing nature, and was also entranced by her beauty. He was sure that Sharada would be an ideal life partner for him, and the marriage was accordingly fixed. Sharada's wedding with Sridhar was held within a month. All the guests were greatly impressed by the beauty and good nature of the bride, and they congratulated Sridhar on his good fortune.

Life progressed peacefully. One evening, Jagannath came out of his house hearing the pleasing voice of Sharada. His attention was drawn to



the cowshed where Sharada was speaking to their servant Rattan who was milking a cow. Sharada was singing a *shloka* in her melodious voice and Rattan was engaged in his task though completely engrossed in Sharada's song. At the end of the *shloka*, Sharada began to explain its meaning to Rattan.

"Rattan," she said, "one day, infant Krishna's mother Yashoda was, like you, milking cows in Gokul. Krishna came from behind her, and hugging her with both arms said, 'Mother, when will you give me milk?' Yashoda was surprised, and said, 'Not now, Kanhaiya, you must drink milk only after it becomes dark.'

'What is darkness?' asked baby Krishna. Yashoda answered, 'We will be unable to see anything when it becomes dark.' Rattan, do you know what this little baby did? He closed his eyes with both hands and said, 'It is now dark. I can see nothing. Won't you give me milk now?' He asked this in such a sweet voice."

Sharada thus discoursed on Krishnalila. Jagannath was deeply struck, listening to both her voice and words. Her discourse made a deep impression on him, and when he looked at Rattan, it seemed to Jagannath that Rattan almost felt he was in mother Yashoda's place and presence. It was clear to Jagannath from Rattan's face that he had just had a deep spiritual experience. Pundit Jagannath left the house, with great regard for Rattan and Sharada.

The next day both Sridhar and Sharada were much surprised to see Jagannath himself reciting *shlokas* from *Krishnatarangini* to Rattan, and explaining the meaning to him in simple words. Both were surprised at the sudden transformation and change in Jagannath. They did not know the reason. Yet, they were overjoyed at the pleasant smile on Jagannath's face as soon as he saw his son and daughter-in-law.

The Vetala concluded the story there and addressed King Vikram. “O King, Jagannath maintained that poets should expose their poetry only to educated and discriminating listeners. In fact, he went to the extent of saying that reciting poetry to the uneducated was like insulting Saraswati. The father and son had many arguments over this issue. He tried to change his son’s attitude in every way that he could, even using threats. Then, why did he keep quiet when he found his daughter-in-law reciting a beautiful shloka from the *Krishnatarangini* to the servant Rattan? Why didn’t he get angry or upset with her? Do you think that he was jealous of his son’s popularity and that is why he made such a fuss about his style of poetry and his appeal to the ordinary person? And then he himself started reading out shlokas to the servant. Wasn’t that odd or improper? Why did he behave like that? If you know the answer and yet

refuse to speak, your head will explode into tiny pieces!”

So the long-suffering Vikramaditya once again answered the Vetala. He said: “Jagannath had no truck with illiterate or uneducated people till his son got married, because his prejudice kept him away from his son’s friends. It is wrong to assume that he was jealous of his son. But when he saw before his own eyes the effect Sharada’s song and explanation had on Rattan, he realised the error of his ways for the first time. He understood that anyone who wants to can appreciate and enjoy poetry, and by turning away from ordinary folks he had done them and poetry an injustice. That is why he changed his attitude and principles.”

As soon as Vikram spoke, the Vetala zoomed off to the tree with the corpse once more. And the king drew his sword and went after the Vetala.



Festivals of India

'Ganapati' Bappa Morya'

All Hindus pray to Ganesha for success before starting any new venture.

The festival of the lovable, elephant-headed, potbellied god, Ganesha, comes off in August this year. This festival is called Ganesh Chaturthi and it is celebrated with great fervour all over India, especially in Maharashtra.

In Maharashtra, the Ganesh Mahotsav begins on Chaturthi, or the fourth day of the bright fortnight of the Indian month of Bhadrapada, sometime in August-September. The festival is spread over ten days and it ends on Ananta Chaturdashi, the eleventh and final day of the festival.

At homes, small idols of Ganesha are worshipped. But in the community pujas, that is, in the common pujas organised in every street or locality, the idols are usually huge. The bigger ones are even eight to ten metres tall.

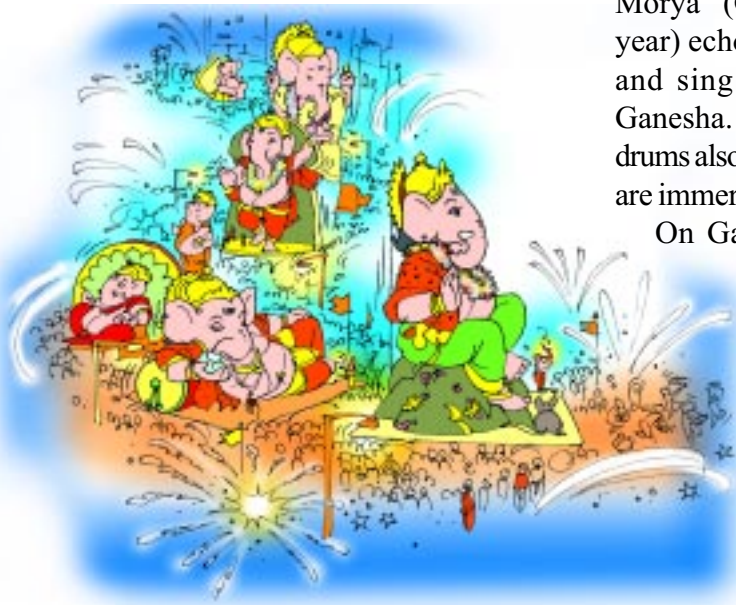
The Ganesha idol installed at Khairatabad, in Hyderabad city, is usually more than 30 feet tall.

On Ananta Chaturdashi, which is the day of the *visarjan* or the immersion, the idols are taken out in a procession in vans bedecked with multi-coloured lights and shining festoons. The idols are decorated with flowers, coins, almonds, cashewnuts, and raisins.

The chanting of 'Ganapati Bappa Morya' (Ganapati, come soon next year) echoes in the air. People dance and sing songs in praise of Lord Ganesha. The sound of cymbals and drums also adds to the fanfare. The idols are immersed in the sea at Mumbai.

On Ganesh Chaturthi, a special sweet called *modak*, which is supposed to be Lord Ganesha's favourite sweet, is prepared. It is steamed rice dumpling, stuffed with coconut and

Chandamama



jaggery. The sweetmeat is usually made on the first day of Ganesh Chaturthi. Besides modak, others like *karanjis*, *ladoos*, *chaklis*, *kadbolis*, and *anarsas* are popular delicacies associated with this festival.

Ganesh Chaturthi is celebrated all over India though in different ways. In U. P., married women fast on this day and eat food only after seeing the moon. Down south, too, people celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi with enthusiasm. In Karnataka, it is celebrated as *Gowri-Ganesha hubba*, or the twin festivals of Gowri and Ganesha. In Tamil Nadu, the festival is traditionally celebrated in all homes. People buy small clay idols of Ganesha and also small umbrellas made of paper and confetti. Sweets like ladoos and *kozhakattai* are offered to the lord. Nowadays, community pujas, like those in Mumbai, are becoming common everywhere in India.

When Ganesha went public

Let's go back to 1894, for a moment. India was then under the British rule. Indians were devoid of

Do you know?

- Elephants have been traditionally known for their wisdom. No wonder then, Lord Ganesha with his elephant head is considered to be an embodiment of wisdom!

- The elephant head is the only animal figure that possesses the form of the Om symbol.

- Surprising, isn't it, to note that this elephant-headed heavyweight of a god should have a tiny mouse as his mount? The complete picture of Ganesha includes an elephant-head, a human form, and a tiny mouse – which only go to show that creatures, big or small, are equally important in god's scheme of things!

any enthusiasm and completely clueless about their future. The entire country was in a turmoil. It was then that the Congress leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra took the initiative to unite the people of Maharashtra. He made Ganesh Chaturthi a community celebration and encouraged people to participate in large numbers. He thought of ways and means of using the festival as an instrument to unify the people and infuse them with a sense of national and cultural pride. Patriotic songs and group dances became a part of the festivities. Folk plays called *tamashas* were staged to infuse patriotism and nationalistic feelings.

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Heady Tales!

Do you know how Lord Ganesha got an elephant-head? There are many interesting myths to explain this unique figure.

According to the Brahma Vaivaswatha Purana, it is said, when Ganesha was born to Goddess Parvati, she invited all the gods and goddesses to visit and bless the child. They came, congratulated Parvati, and blessed baby Ganesha

— all except Sani (Saturn), who refused to see the child.

Parvati was very upset. Sani explained to her that he was under a curse: anything he saw would blow into pieces. But Parvati would not listen. She insisted that Sani blessed her baby.

1. Who is the brother of Lord Ganesha?

2. Who dictated the verses of *the Mahabharata* to Ganesha, who was acting as the scribe?

3. When is Ganesh Chaturthi celebrated?

4. What is Ganesha's favourite sweet dish?

5. What is the eleventh day of Ganesh Chaturthi called?

How much of a Ganesh buff are you?

Try this quiz to find out!

6. What form of symbol does the elephant's head hold?

7. Who enthused the people of India by introducing a novel way to celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi?

8. Who was responsible for Ganesha's broken tusk?

With great hesitation, Sani came forward and took a look at the baby. Immediately, disaster struck. Ganesha's head split into smithereens! Parvati was distraught and was pacified only when Ganesha was fitted with an elephant-head and endowed with great qualities.

Another Ganesha myth tells us that Goddess Parvati made the figure of a boy out of clay and infused life into it. She then instructed this boy to guard the palace while she was away taking her bath. When Lord Siva came in, the boy began to question him. Siva was so enraged that he blew the boy's head to pieces. Parvati, when she came to know of this, was inconsolable, until the boy was fitted with an elephant's head.

Colouring Fun

Here is a gorgeous picture of Ganesha. All that the Lord needs is a dash of colour. So what are you waiting for? Get going, friends!

Answers to quiz on the previous page:

Check out your scores here!

1. The god Kartikeya, who has the peacock as his vahana (mount).
2. Sage Vyasa.
3. On the fourth day of the bright fortnight of Bhadrapada during August-September.
4. Modak, a sweet dish stuffed with coconut and jaggery.
5. Ananta Chaturdashi.
6. The symbol 'Om'.
7. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the nationalist leader and freedom fighter.
8. Sage Parashurama, known for his anger.

Chandamama



Giving Happiness



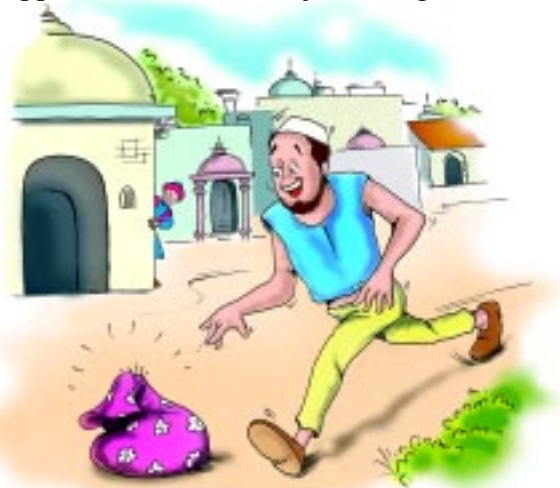
Hodja Naseeruddin was one day walking to town. On the way, he saw a man sitting gloomily under a tree. He looked so sad that the Hodja asked him what the matter was. "Oh!" said the man with a big sigh. "I feel there is nothing of interest in this life. I've enough money and don't really have any troubles but nothing seems to bring me joy. I'm bored and spiritless. I took this trip to find if there is anything that would interest me, but so far nothing has turned up." Then the man once again dejectedly put his head in his hands.

Suddenly, the Hodja rushed up, snatched the bag the man had beside him and ran off with it. He ran down the road as swift as a deer. Since he knew the road well, he was able to take short-cuts across the country and join the road well ahead of the man. When he judged he was far enough, August 2001

he put the bag down on the roadside and sat some distance away to wait for the listless man.

After a while, the hapless man turned up looking anxious and distressed. He was more upset than ever at the loss of his bag. He then caught sight of his bag sitting quietly on the roadside. At once he perked up and started shouting for joy at finding his bag intact.

"That's one way of giving happiness," said the Hodja smiling.



Saga of India

Glimpses of a great civilisation –
its glorious quest for Truth through the ages

19. Episodes in Stones



“How lucky you little ones are!” observed Jayashree, addressing her children Sandip and Chameli. “How much I wish I could go back in time, become of your age once again, and listen to your Grandpa!”

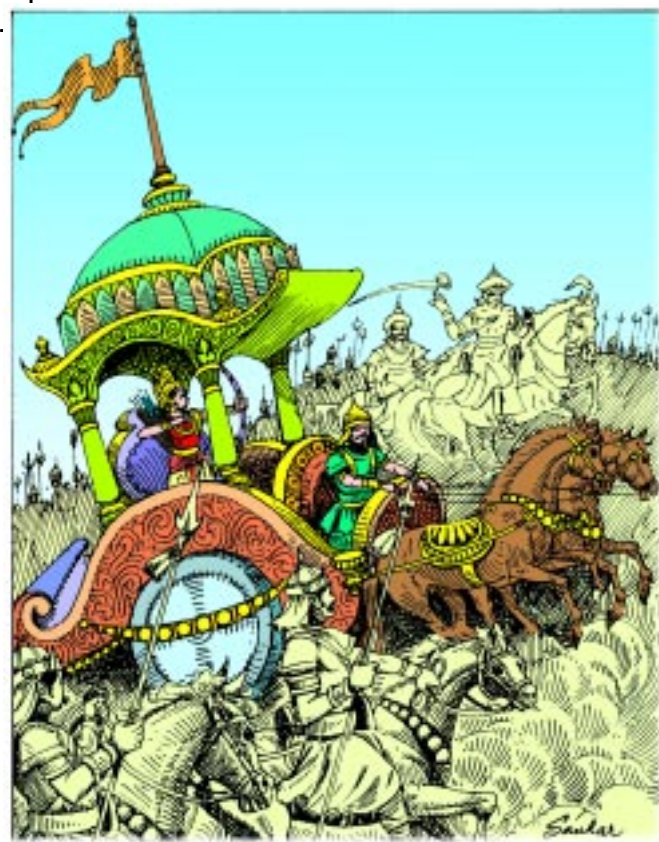
“Well, if years would roll back and you became a child again, you may become lucky, but there would be no Sandip and Chameli to be equally lucky!” rejoined Sandip.

The children were helping their mother carry food and plates from the kitchen to the dining table for their dinner. Little did they know that

Professor Devnath had already taken his seat in the dining room.

“My daughter, I would be happy to tell you as much as I tell them – only if you could join us at dinner. But you never do that. You must wait upon us and eat only when we had finished,” said the professor in a voice tender with love.

Jayashree blushed. “But it’s all right, Father. Chameli often tells me, in her own way, what she hears from you,” she hurried to say. “However, since the children were good enough to help me bring everything to the



There had been no research worth the name to sift the facts from the folklore. Even research in that field must be imaginative. It cannot be done along the conventional lines. That is to say, it is easy to trace what could be a fact and what could not be a fact. But the success of research in such cases would lie in the researcher's ability to identify a fact that lies there wearing the mask of a story."

"Can you give us an example, Grandpa?" asked Sandip.

"One of the oldest Shiva temples in our country is that of Sri Viswanath at Kashi, also called Varanasi. For your

information, Varanasi could be the oldest living city in the world! The legend says that once Shiva grew unhappy with the King of Varanasi, Divodas, and left the city. The great God believed that once He deserts a place, it would face untold misery. But

nothing like that happened. People continued to be as prosperous as ever – and that was because the king's piety protected them. But a time came – after many, many years – when the king realized that it was not enough for him or his subjects to lead just a happy worldly life. They must also

care for the life hereafter; they must not forget that the ultimate goal of life table, I can sit with you and clear some of my doubts," she added, as she drew a chair and sat down.

"Thank you, Mother, thanks a lot. You must prompt Grandpa to come out with stories," exclaimed a happy Sandip.

"You may be disappointed, my son, for my query may not elicit any story. I wish to know if the legends behind the great temples, like those of Sri Jagannath and Kanya Kumari, had any factual basis," said Jayashree.

"My daughter, many of these legends have elements of fact behind them, but generally they are lost amidst elements of imagination and folklore.

"My daughter, many of these legends have elements of fact behind them, but generally they are lost amidst elements of imagination and folklore.

was to be united with God! Once the king had realized this, the Lord returned to the city.”

The professor paused.

“Is there any fact hidden in this story?” asked Chameli.

“There is. For a while Buddhism had come to prevail in Varanasi. The traditional allegiance to Shiva had weakened. As you know, Buddhism did not speak of God as the ultimate goal of life. But once again the people recovered their great old faith – a fact that is celebrated as the return of Shiva.”

“I see. So, it is not enough to enjoy the legends merely as stories, but one should discover history in them,” commented Sandip.

“One should, if one is interested. But first you must know the legends. Apart from history, the legends also contain other kinds of records of a bygone era – the sociological and psychological conditions of the people. You remember the story of Sri Jagannath. Isn’t it significant that the Brahmin Vidyapati should marry a tribal girl and the couple’s offspring should be accepted as priests of the deity without the slightest murmur? It is obvious that thousands of years ago the people’s attitude towards tribes

Chandamama

and castes was different from what it became at later times!”

As Jayashree insisted that her father-in-law should first finish eating his food, he obliged her and then continued:

“Or take the case of the legend of the famous Meenakshi of Madurai. The fish-eyed beautiful princess of Madhurapuri – as the city was originally known – succeeded to her father’s throne. She ruled the land ideally, but the princes of the neighbourhood wanted her to marry one of them and pass on the administration to her husband. As she did not oblige them, they united against



her and attacked her kingdom. She faced them and vanquished them all. The legend shows how strong male chauvinism was even then, but what is more significant, it celebrates the triumph of courage over prejudices.”

“Why do you stop, Grandpa? Why don’t you go on?” pleaded Sandip.

“Don’t be so demanding, my son, he may be feeling tired,” his mother whispered a warning.

But the professor seemed lost in some remote thought. He did not hear them. However, he soon grew conscious of the silence around him and smiled. He then resumed.

“There are legends and legends. Some are so sad! Maybe they sound sad because the popular legends cannot always convey their subtle truth. Take for example the story of Konark, the great temple dedicated to the Sun-god. King Narasimha Deva of Kalinga commissioned twelve hundred architects, engineers, and artisans of his kingdom to build that unique monument. They worked for twelve years at a stretch, never leaving the site, and built up the marvellous shrine, tier by tier, lifting stones weighing up to two thousand tons to a height of two hundred feet, we don’t know how.

“At last the work approached completion, but for its crown which

was to be set in a unique way. Twelve years passed and the original plan describing the exact principle to be followed in fixing the crown had been forgotten or misplaced. The king was impatient. He had summoned the chief architect, Vishu Maharana, into his camp near the site and had ordered him to complete the work before the next sunrise or to face grim consequences.

As the pensive Vishu sat on a slab of stone wondering what to do, a teenaged boy approached him slowly. Once the boy’s identity was revealed, Vishu’s joy burst into tears. The little visitor was none other than his son, Dharmapada, whom he had left as an infant in his distant village. Proud of the rumours of his father’s achievements, the boy had come all the way to meet him.



Soon Dharmapada learnt about the crisis his father and his companions faced. The boy had devoted all his time at home to study the palm-leaf manuscripts on temple crafts his forefathers had collected or written. The solution to the problem flashed in his mind. He disclosed this to his father and others. In no time they knew that what the boy said was correct. At once they started making a determined effort to put his suggestion to practice. Lo and behold, by sunrise the task of fixing the crown was completed.

A joyous hullabaloo shook the camps of the twelve hundred men. They thought the king would now hail their deed; and they could go back home with prizes and pride. They danced around the young Dharmapada; they lifted him high and sang his glory.

But some puny, mean voice was heard telling another little fellow: “So, what we twelve hundred experts failed to do has been done by a teenager! Do you think the king will pardon us when he comes to know of it? And so far as the future is concerned, what a laughing stock we are going to make!”

Unfortunately, Dharmapada overheard this. He must have been a highly sensitive boy. He might have wondered, indeed, what does it matter if he disappeared from the scene altogether? None in the next generation would then know anything about him and all the credit for the great temple would go to the entire group of craftsmen, without a humble individual like him claiming a major share of it!

It was a full-moon night. Such was the situation of the temple that there were moments of high tide when the waters of the sea encircled it. Dharmapada was last seen sitting atop the crown, gazing at infinity. Never afterwards did anybody see him again. He became a mystery.

“What a touching episode!” murmured Jayashree.

-Visvvasu





Classical Indian Dances

Outstanding Odissi

A graceful dance with sculptresque poses – that's Odissi, in a nutshell!

Archaeologists say that Odissi is the earliest classical Indian dance style. Deep in the Rani Gumpha caves of Orissa are beautiful paintings of dancers in charming poses. These caves date back to 200 B.C. It is said that these engravings of the Odissi dance are older than even the *Natyashastra* of Bharata Muni.

Odissi traces its origins to the ritual dances performed in the temples of ancient northern India. The dance form became widely

popular around A.D. 700 when *maharis* or temple dancers performed it at various temples in the kingdom. The Sun temple in Konark in Orissa abounds in sculptures of lovely dance poses.

In the early days of the 16th century, young boys dressed up as girls performed Odissi in the courtyard of temples. This was called the *Gotipua* or *Akhaḍapila* system. Most temples had a *Natamandira*, a podium for dancing, decorated with sculptures in various dance poses, and holding different musical instruments.





Most Odissi performances are based on the *Gita Govinda*, the spiritual lyrical composition of the legendary poet, Jayadeva of A.D. 1200. The melodious songs of the *Gita Govinda* that describe the immortal love of Radha and Lord Krishna form the theme of the dance.

In the *thali* or plate dance, which is one of the items of Odissi, the dancer manoeuvres a *thali* with his or her feet. Expert dancers sometimes balance two additional *thalis* on their palms.

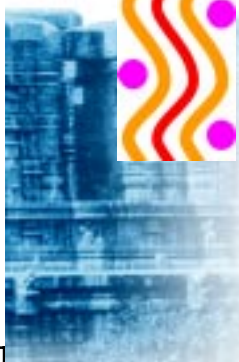


Odissi dancers wear colourful and bright silk saris woven in the local looms. They wear jewellery that is typically Oriya with silver and gold filigree work.

Like other Indian classical dance forms, Odissi has two major facets: *nritta*, in which dancers create beautiful poses and patterns with their body movement; and *abhinaya*, in which they use symbolic hand gestures and facial expressions to interpret a story or theme.



The annual Dance Festival at Konark with the famous Sun temple as the backdrop is one of the splendid shows of this graceful temple dance.



Men of Wit



Tenali Rama, as every school child knows, was the cleverest and wittiest man at the court of Krishna Deva Raya of Vijayanagar. He always managed to wriggle his way out of any tight spot with a clever argument.

One day, it so happened that Krishna Deva Raya got very angry with Rama. “Go away from here!” he said. “I don’t want to set my eyes on your face again.”



Many of the courtiers who were jealous of Rama were very happy. They were almost sure he would not be able to save himself this time. They wondered what he would do.

However, for Tenali Rama, a small thing like this was not going to bother him. The next day, he set off for the court as usual, after buying a pot on the way.





The courtiers curiously watched Rama enter the court. They knew the king was still upset, and some hoped he would be angry enough even to banish Rama from the city.

Tenali Rama put the pot he had with him over his head and took his place in the court as though nothing had happened.



All those who saw him thus waited with bated breath to watch what the king would do. "Didn't I tell you not to come here?" he thundered. "How dare you come in, and with that ridiculous pot over your head? What do you mean by this?"



"I'm sorry, sire," said Tenali Rama through the pot. "I was only obeying you. You did say you didn't want to see my face again." The king burst into laughter and Rama knew he had got out of a tight corner once again.



A folk tale from Uttar Pradesh

Uttar Pradesh is one of the largest of Indian states, covering an area of 236,286 sq km. It lies between 24 and 31 degrees latitude and 77 and 84 degrees longitude to the east. In sheer size, it measures half of France and is slightly bigger than England. And it is the most thickly populated of all Indian states with a population of 13.21 crores.

An adage in India says that the dialect of the people changes for every 5 km of travel by land! In U.P., Hindi is the most widely spoken language. Many dialects of Hindi are spoken in Uttar Pradesh – Kaurvi, Hariyanvi, Brij, Kanauji, Bundeli, Khari Bholi, Brij Bhasha, Boska, Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Garhwali, and Kumaoni. A glossary of the Hindi words used in the folk tale here is given at the end of the story.

Soothsayer by accident

After Savitri *aaji* got her only daughter Chameli married to a nice boy and packed her off, she settled down to a quiet peaceful life in her village. Chameli's husband Fathinga was a cheerful man and Chameli was sure to be happy with him. *Aaji* was a contented woman.

One day, Chameli and Fathinga came to visit Savitri *aaji*. The boy next door came running up to *aaji*: "Your daughter and son-in-law are on their



way! I saw them entering the village!”
Aaji was thrilled.

“Listen, my boy, Balesar,” she shouted to him. “Get me a *lota* of milk from Foola *chachi*. Tell her I have guests.” Balesar dashed off with the *lota*. *Aaji* had been fanning herself vigorously in the courtyard. She had been taking a breather after cooking *dal-bhath* and *tarkari* for her lunch. Now that her dear daughter was on her way, *aaji* got around to rolling out some *rotis*, too.

Chameli went straight inside to meet her mother, but Fathinga roamed outside the house for some time. He looked up at the sloping tiled roof of the squarish mud-house and admired the design of the wooden beams that supported the roof. And he went around the house, tracing with his forefingers, the red and white lines drawn on the wall all around the house to keep away the evil eye. He soon reached the backyard of the house.

Hearing noises from the kitchen, he stopped and listened keenly and then entered the house, laughing to himself.

Aaji fussed over them like a mother hen and bustled around getting their lunch ready. She cleaned and laid brass plates and deep *katoris*. She filled a big *katori* with rich, creamy milk, another with *chowli saag*, one more with *dal*. She placed some *rotis*

Factfile

In the plains of Uttar Pradesh, the main agricultural crops are wheat, pulses, peas, sugarcane, and mustard.

Naturally, the food habits of the local people reflect the crops grown locally.

In summer, plain cooked lentils and ghee, vegetables like gourds, lady’s finger and *tinda* are eaten along with rice and *rotis*.

A popular drink is milk boiled in earthenware to which some jaggery is added. Fresh curds are also consumed.

In winter, seasonal vegetables like potatoes, cauliflowers, and greens such as mustard, soya leaves and spinach become part of the diet. The *rotis* are made of maize flour, which keeps the body warm. Sweets in the diet include a *kheer* made of sugarcane juice.

During festivals, special preparations include *laddus* of *besan*, *shakarpara* and *burfis* made of *khoa*. The *boondi laddus* made during Holi have a little *bhang* or local liquor in them. Like the festival itself, the food preparations of Holi are colourful. The *pooris* and *pilau* have edible colours added to them.



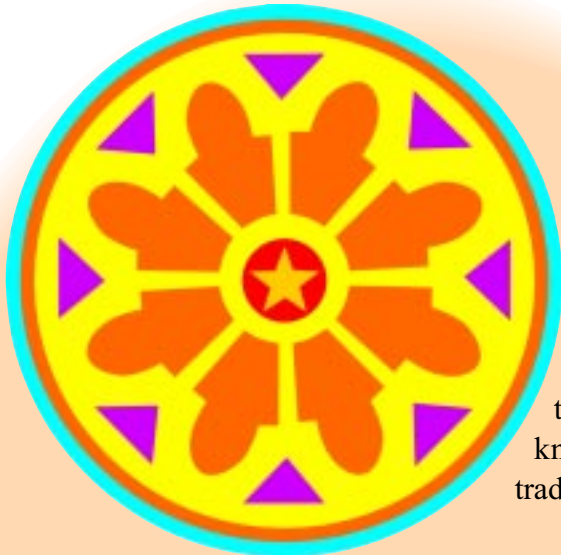


and some *aalu bhujia* on each plate and invited them to eat.

Fathinga noticed that there were five *rotis* on his plate and four on his wife's. "Amma, why haven't you kept any *rotis* for yourself?" he asked. While in the backyard, he had heard her bake nine *rotis* on the *tawa* one after another! "Oh no!" smiled *aaji*. "There are more *rotis* in the kitchen!" And she quickly pulled the wooden bowl in which she had kept the *rotis*, close to her.

"No, *amma*, don't hide anything from me. I'm a soothsayer." He joked.

Chameli looked at her husband with surprise. "So, how many *rotis* did *amma* make?" she asked him. He closed his eyes, muttered something under his breath, and said: "Nine!"



Traditional arts and crafts

Zari work

U.P. is known for its silk saris. Most of these silk saris come from the looms of Benaras and Mubarakpur. Mubarakpur is the textile capital of Uttar Pradesh and it is well known for the *zari* work on saris and other traditional garments.

Rangoli

The womenfolk make colourful *rangoli* on floors and walls during festivals. The *rangoli* includes patterns like swastika, lotus and other floral designs. These patterns are made of *gulaal* or colourful powder during Holi, wheat flour paste during Diwali, and ground rice paste during other festivals.



Chameli peeped into the wooden bowl. There weren't any. "I'll eat rice!" replied *aaji* in embarrassment. "Why do you want to count your *rotis*? Eat before the food gets cold!"

In just hours the whole village knew that *aaji*'s son-in-law was a brilliant soothsayer. But Chameli was worried.

The next day after lunch Savitri and her daughter were busy making fans with fine wheat straws. Fathinga was fast asleep. Who should come running there but Kallu *dhobi*? He panted for breath as he came to a halt. "*Aaji*, my donkey has gone missing! Will you please ask your son-in-law to tell me

Festival

In the month of Chaitra, which falls during April, the people of U.P. celebrate Navratri, the festival of Goddess Durga. The goddess is worshipped at midnight and special food is cooked and offered to her. This puja is called Basioora. In some communities, seven different types of dishes are prepared and offered to seven forms of goddesses. Rangolis with rice paste are drawn in front of all the houses.

where I can find him?"

Aaji ran in to wake up Fathinga with the question. Now Fathinga stared blankly. How was he to know? He closed his eyes and tried to think calmly. On a hot dry day like this, where would a donkey be? He opened his eyes and said with diffidence, "Donkeys graze in palaces, so royal are your asses!"

Kallu *dhobi* set off to the royal gardens. Sure enough, his donkey stood there in the shade of a tall tree, nibbling at the grass! Fathinga's fame spread like wildfire!

Late in the evening, when Fathinga was sipping a glass of buttermilk sweetened with jaggery, there came up to him the army commander of the kingdom. Senapati Shersingh's horse was missing. And who was better than Fathinga to take the complaint to?





Now the fake soothsayer grew really worried. ‘Oh God, I’ll be caught now,’ he told himself and then tried to think. Where would a hungry and tired horse go?

Without much hope, he said, “If a runaway horse you seek, in a haystack you must peek!”

Surprisingly, the horse was found in a haystack! And the Senapati was a happy man. He presented Fathinga with some silver coins.

But now Fathinga was really afraid. He wanted to leave the village before the people discovered what a fraud he was. “Come on, let’s leave tomorrow!” he told his disappointed wife. Chameli

was really looking forward to a few more days with her mother.

Next day, just as they were packing up, a servant from the palace was announced. “Fathinga!” he said. “Our queen Kanakalata has lost her *naulakha* necklace. Only you can help her find it!”

Fathinga’s heart skipped a beat. An order from the palace! The game’s up, he told himself. He wondered how the cells in the jails in this kingdom would look like!

“Where did the queen leave the necklace?” he asked of the servant.

“Near her bedside; she had left her necklace along with her *hasuli*, *nathiya*, *jhumka*, *kade*, *pajani*, *kardhani*. But only the necklace is missing.”

So the queen must have been sleeping when the jewel was stolen! thought our soothsayer*ji*. And he blabbered: “The queen’s necklace! Who stole it? Nindiya Rani is the culprit.”

What he meant was, her sleep (*neend*) was the culprit! Little did he know that there was a maid called Nindiya in the palace. But the royal servant knew Nindiya well. “Hah!” he exclaimed. “I knew it. I always thought Nindiya was the culprit!” How lucky Fathinga was! It was Nindiya after all, and she handed the necklace back on being charged with the theft.

Fathinga heaved a sigh of relief and set out for his village, when he was summoned by the king himself. His heart sank to his *jhootis* as he made his way to the palace. “Hmmm...” said King Durgvijaysingh, frowning at him from under his bushy eyebrows. “I’ve been hearing a lot about you. But I’m not convinced. If you can tell me correctly what I hold in my hand, I’ll reward you with a *zamindari*. But if you go wrong, I’ll have you shaved bald, blacken your face, seat you on a donkey, and parade you around the kingdom!”

The king thrust out a fist and flashed it under Fathinga’s terrified face.

Fathinga was in despair. ‘How to escape, I don’t know.’

“A frightened life flutters in your royal hand!” he mumbled half-dazed with fear. He meant, of course, that his life was in the king’s hand.

But wonder of wonders, the king gasped in disbelief and opened his fist. And there was revealed a fluttering firefly! “You’re right, O great

soothsayer!” acknowledged the king. “I held an insect’s life in my hand! I grant you a *zamindari* straight away!”

And Fathinga asked for a *zamin-dari* as far away from his mother-in-law’s town as possible so that his reputation as a soothsayer would not haunt him!

- Alka Rai

Glossary

Aaji: grandmother.

Lota: tumbler.

Chachi: aunt.

Dal-bhath: rice and boiled toor dhal.

Tarkari: vegetables.

Katori: small bowl.

Chowli: red colour
Palak

Aalu bhujia: a savoury made out of potato.

Amma: mother

Roti: bread made of unleavened dough cooked on a tawa.

Tawa: a flat cooking pan.

Dhobi: washerman.

Naulakha: necklace with precious stones worth nine (nau) lakh rupees.

Hasuli: one piece necklace set

Nathiya: nose ring

Jhumka: earring.

Chhade: silver anklet (plain ring type)

Pajjani: thick silver anklet with ghunguru

Kardhani: Waist chain

Jhootis: slippers.

Zamindari: land in the possession of a zamindar (zamin-land).

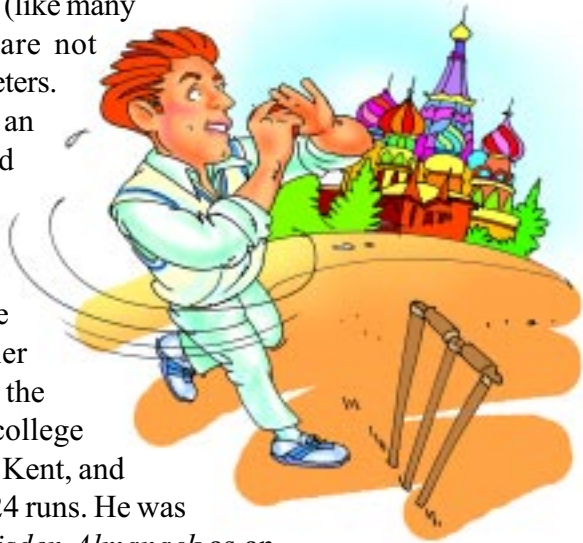
Rangoli: attractive designs made on the floor with colours.



NEWS FLASH

A Russian name in Wisden

Cricket is not played in Russia (like many other countries) and there are not (m)any Russians among cricketers. Alexei Korobkin seems to be an exception. This 17-year-old schoolboy from St. Petersburg is currently a student of the Dover College in Kent, England, and he was the college team's leading bowler (13 wickets in 59 overs) in the 2000 season. Recently, the college played against the XI Club in Kent, and Korobkin took 6 wickets for 24 runs. He was duly given an entry in the *Wisden Almanack* as an outstanding schoolboy cricketer of the year. Cricket's 'Bible', which thus has a Russian entry for the first time, says Alexei's ambition is to take cricket to Russia once he leaves his college.



Mascots given names



Three names will be on the lips of football fans in the next 12 months. They are Nik, Kaz, and Ato, given to the mascots of the 2002 World Cup Football (May 31 to June 30). The names were chosen from among those suggested by fans all over the world. The FIFA had earlier approved of the prototype of the mascots - a shiny, horned trio looking very much like some visitors from outer space. They are to be of yellow, blue, and purple colour.

Richest cricketer

Is he an English player? No. Does he hail from Australia? No. West Indies? South Africa? No, no. He is none other than our own Sachin Tendulkar. And it is not cricket that has made him the richest. He recently renewed his contract with Worldtel for the period between 1995 and now for Rs 80 crores, much more than what Shane Warne or Brian Lara had earned. The earlier contract was for only Rs.24 crores. Sachin has been appearing in advertisements promoting products from cool drinks to websites. It is Sachin's ranking in world cricket which prompted Worldtel to make such an attractive offer to India's cricketing hero.



Tournament among families

Have you heard of the Nike Nellamakkada Cup given for hockey? No, but you will now come to know about it because it has earned an entry in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. A unique hockey tournament organised in Ammathi in Karnataka is confined to teams drawn from families. And the tournament held this year attracted teams from as many as 226 families. In the final played on May 13, the Koorthanda family won 3-1 against Cheppudira. The game saw the thousandth goal being scored this year. Representatives of Guinness were present throughout the tournament, which is considered to be the first of its kind in the world.



**Tales from many lands
(Scandinavia)**



Cape O'Rushes

Once upon a time, in one of the northern lands of Europe, there was a very rich gentleman. He had many mansions and several acres of land. He also had three daughters.

One day, he asked his first daughter, "How much do you love me, my eldest one?"

"Why," she replied, "I love you as much as I love my own life."

The gentleman was very pleased. "You're a good daughter," he said.

Then he turned to his second daughter and asked, "What about you, my dear one? How much do you love your father?"

"Oh, better than anything in all the world," was her answer.

This pleased the father no end. He then turned to his youngest and favourite daughter and asked, "And you, my darling, how much do you love your father?"

He was quite confident of her answer, for he knew she loved him dearly.

"Why, I love you as much as fresh meat loves salt," she said.

This did not please the father. He did not like the idea that she placed her love for him next to something as common as salt.

"I've nurtured a viper in my breast all this while!" he exclaimed. "How deceived I have been by you! You don't love me at all. And I'll have

you no longer in my house. Go away from here and don't show your face in my house again."

So the poor girl left her father's house and went into the cold heath to fend for herself. She walked till she came to a marsh where rushes (a kind of grass) grew. She made herself a cape with a hood out of the rushes to protect and hide her fine clothes and walked on till she came to a great mansion.

"Do you want a maid?" she asked after knocking on the back door of that grand house.

"Not really," said the cook who opened the door.

"I've nowhere to go. I'll do any kind of work and will ask no wages except a little food and a roof over my head," she begged.

The cook took pity on her. "If you'll wash the pots and scrape the pans, you may stay," said the woman.

So the poor girl washed the pots and scraped the pans in the great house and lived with the rest of the servants. They called her Cape o' Rushes because she did not give her name and did not ever take off her cloak.

One day, there was a big dance at a neighbour's place and the servants were given leave to take a look at the grand people in their fine clothes. They were all excited as they got ready to go to the ball. Cape o' Rushes, however, excused herself saying she was too tired from the strain

of cleaning and washing she had to do and stayed at home. But as soon as the others set off, Cape o' Rushes took off her cloak, cleaned herself up and went to the dance in her fine clothes. No one at the dance was as finely dressed. No else looked as graceful as Cape o' Rushes.

Her master's son, who was also there, fell in love with her and would dance with no one else. Almost at the end of the dance, before the others left, Cape o' Rushes quietly left the neighbour's house and went home. When the other servants came in, she pretended to be asleep in her cloak of rushes. In the morning, she asked how the dance went.

"Oh, you missed a grand sight Cape o' Rushes," they said. "A most beautiful lady came to the ball. She was so graceful and lovely in her fine clothes that our master's son had eyes for no one else."



"I'd have liked to have seen her," said Cape o' Rushes.

"There'll be another dance this evening and maybe she'll be there again. No one knows who she is or where she went," they said.

That evening again Cape o' Rushes pretended to be too tired to go out. But when the others left, she quickly threw off her cloak, cleaned herself, and went to the dance. The master's son was counting on her being there and was looking out for her. When she arrived, he took her hand and danced with her all the time. He did not so much as look at anyone else.

Once again, just before the end of the ball, Cape o' Rushes slipped away when no one was looking and was in her bed wrapped in her cloak when the other servants came home.

"Well, you should have been there at the dance last night," they said to her again, the next day. "That beautiful lady was there once again, and the master's son – he would dance with no one else!"

The same thing happened on the third evening also. This time it was the last dance and the master's son tried to get to know Cape o'

Rushes' name and where she lived. But she would tell him nothing and only smiled sweetly up at him. Then he gave her a ring and said that if he did not see her again, he would die.

The next day and for the whole of the next week the master's son tried to look for his pretty dance partner but to no avail. No one seemed to have seen her come and go and no one knew her name. This made the master's son very, very sad and he took to his bed.

"Make some nourishing porridge for the young master," they said to the cook. "He's in a poor way."

The cook set about the job when Cape o' Rushes came in and said, "Let me make the porridge. I've a recipe from my grandmother that will cure any illness."

At first the cook was unwilling, but then she gave way. Cape o' Rushes made the porridge nicely, poured it into a clean bowl and before she sent it up to the young master, she slipped into it the ring he had given her.

The young master drank the porridge and then saw the ring at the bottom of the bowl. At once he called for the cook.

"Who made this porridge?" he demanded.



Now the cook did not know what had gone wrong, so she said timidly, "Why young master, I did."

"No, you did not," said he sharply. "Tell me the truth; nothing will happen to you."

"It was Cape o' Rushes. She would make the porridge no matter what I said," said the cook.

"Send her to me," said he.

When Cape o' Rushes went up to him, he asked her, "Where did you get this ring?"

"From him that gave it to me," was her answer.

"Who are you, then?" he asked her.

"I'll show you," she said and went out. She came back in a trice all cleaned up and in her fine clothes. Then the young master knew who she was and got up from his bed declaring he would marry her and no one else.

Cape o' Rushes' father was asked to the wedding. Yet Cape o' Rushes did not tell anyone who she was.

But before the wedding, she went down to the cook and said, "I want you to cook all the meat without any salt."

"Oh, but that will make everything tasteless!" exclaimed the cook.

"Never mind that," was Cape o' Rushes' answer. "Just do as I say."

The wedding day came and they were married. Then the guests sat down to the feast but found they could



not eat anything; it was so tasteless. Cape o' Rushes watched her father from behind her veil. He tasted one dish after another and then burst into tears.

"What's the matter?" asked the master's son. "Is it the meat that distresses you so?"

"Ah," said he. "I had a daughter. I asked her how much she loved me and she said she loved me as much as fresh meat loves salt. And I, the fool that I was, turned her out of the house because I didn't understand the significance of what she said. Indeed the poor girl did love me the best and now she may be dead for all I know." And he sobbed as if his heart would break.

Then Cape o' Rushes threw off her veil and showed herself to him and said, "No, father, here I am." And she put her arms around him.

And so all was well and the two lived happily ever after that.

-Uma Raman

Know Your India

Quiz

The 15th of August every year brings back memories of the country's freedom struggle that lasted a hundred years and ended with the declaration of an independent India that day 54 years ago. The quiz this month enables you to recall some of the major events of those hundred years and the people who fought and brought freedom for the country.

1. The soldiers of which Indian regiment were the first to rebel and start the 1857 Mutiny?
2. Who founded the Indian National Congress?
3. Who presided over the first session of the Congress? Where? When?
4. Who formed the Ghaddar (rebellion) Party in the U.S.A.?
5. A Congress-led procession of nearly 3,000 peasants at Chauri Chaura was fired upon by the police which led to the burning down of the police station there. When did this incident take place? Where is Chauri Chaura?
6. On what day did the Jallianwala massacre take place?
7. Who started the Shivaji Festival in 1895 to stimulate nationalism among the youth?
8. In which year did Gandhiji return from South Africa "to serve my country and my people"?
9. Which revolutionary sacrificed his life fighting a battle with the police at Balasore in 1915?
10. There were three Round Table Conferences in London between Indian leaders and British rulers. Two leaders attended all the three Conferences. Who were they?
11. Who gave the slogan "Inquilab Zindabad"?
12. Where and when was the Indian National Army formed? (*Answers next month*)

Answers to July Quiz

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. 1872 | 7. Muslims and Sikhs |
| 2. 2.2 per cent | 8. Delhi |
| 3. Mizoram | 9. Tamilnadu |
| 4. 30-39 years | 10. Nagaland |
| 5. Bihar | 11. Maharashtra |
| 6. 36.2 per cent | 12. Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh |

Garuda

Art : PAANI

Commander Narendradeva fails to catch Garuda, who makes a mockery of the boasting indulged in by him and his son Ravindradeva who finds himself hoisted on the flagpole much to his embarrassment. Garuda, found unconscious in a boat, is brought to the palace. Ravindradeva unmasks him and is shocked to see his father's face. The King is happy that the new settlement flourishes, thanks to the efforts of Aditya. He makes him the new Prime Minister despite protests from Narendradeva.

Prime Minister Aditya calls a meeting of his senior courtiers.

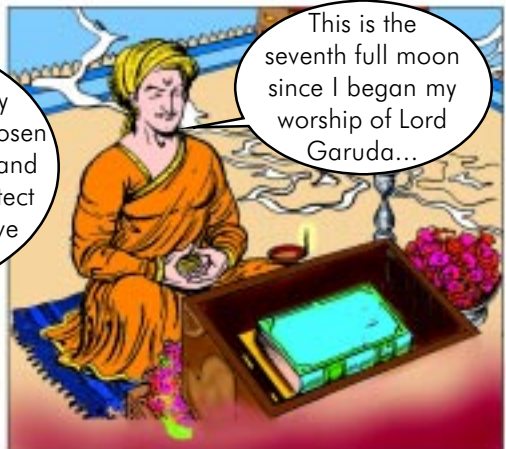
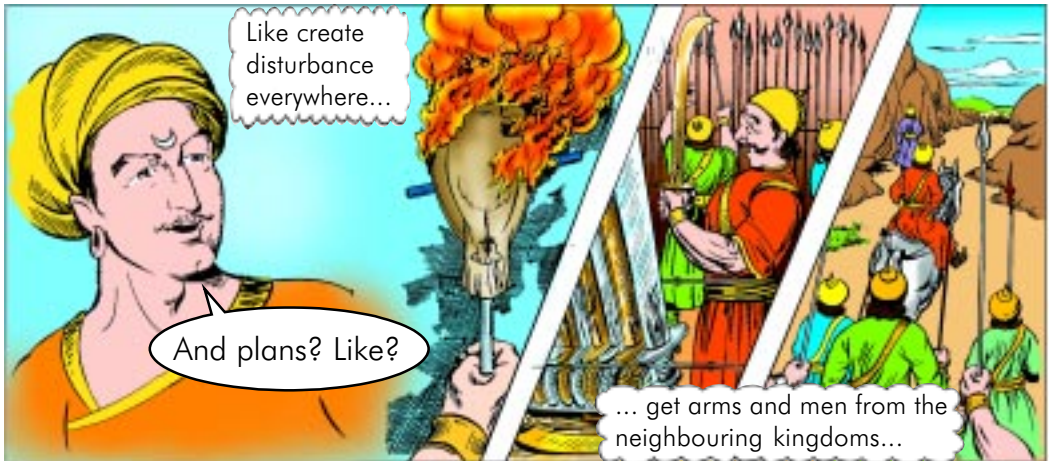


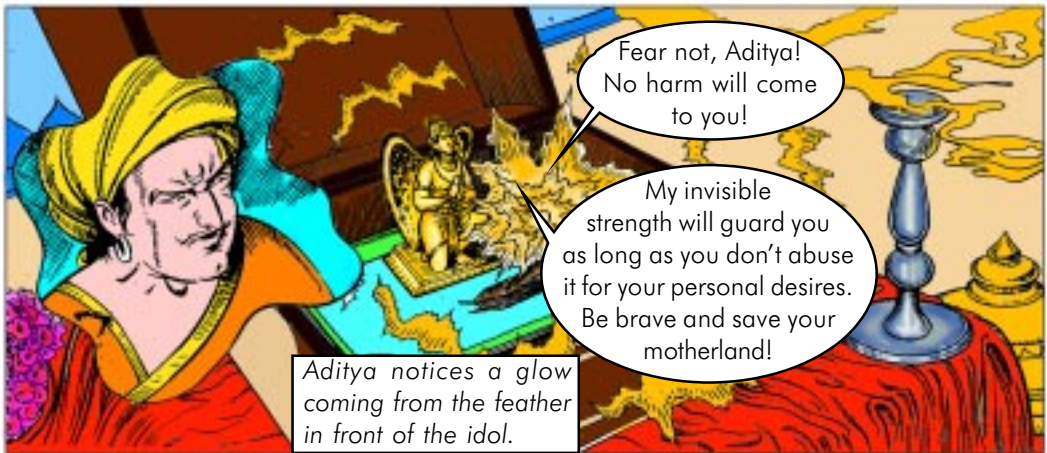
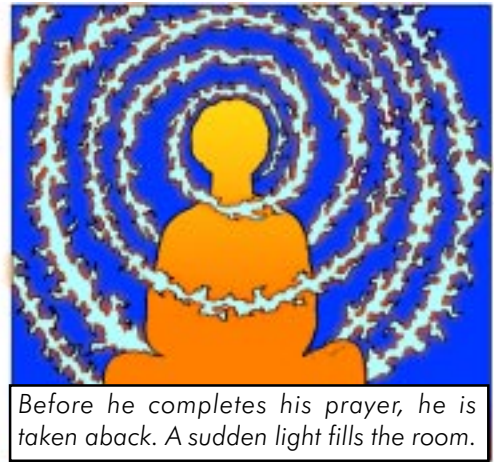
Aditya is bemused as the commander continues his boasting.



Prime Minister's residence. While Aditya seeks the blessings of his father, he is disturbed by a sound.







Prowess and power

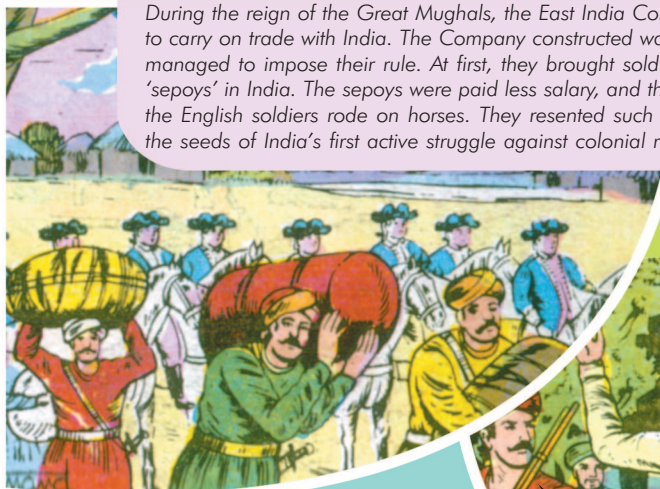
Gopal and Sripal were not only farmers but close relatives, too. Their fields were adjacent to each other. One day, while irrigating their fields, they took up a quarrel and could not come to a compromise. There was a scuffle, and Gopal fell into a ditch and was injured. He was very angry. “You need not have pushed me down,” protested Gopal. “With injuries all over, I won’t be able to do any work for some days. I never expected this from you, Sripal. Anyway, I’m not going to leave the matter at that. I shall take it up with the village chief. Let me see what he’ll do to you.”

He straight away went to the village chief and told him about the quarrel and how he got injured. Unfortunately, Gopal was not aware that the village chief was corrupt and would demand a bribe for a favourable decision. The village chief pulled out a coin from his pocket and placed it on the table next to his chair. He said, “Fifty”.

Gopal was bewildered for a moment. He soon realised that the village chief cleverly avoided mention of any bribe, but at the same time made it clear to Gopal what he was expecting. Feeling disgusted, he just turned around and went away. When he met Sripal again, he said, “You had only exhibited your physical strength. The village chief showed the power he has by virtue of his position. Come on, let us talk it out and find a solution.”



During the reign of the Great Mughals, the East India Company of England had obtained rights to carry on trade with India. The Company constructed warehouses in several places where they managed to impose their rule. At first, they brought soldiers from England; later they recruited 'sepoys' in India. The sepoy were paid less salary, and they had to trudge long distances, while the English soldiers rode on horses. They resented such discrimination. This resentment sowed the seeds of India's first active struggle against colonial rule : the First War of Independence.



The cartridges for the rifles had to be bitten off before use. The sepoy were agitated.



The bullets are smeared with grease!

They've no respect for our religion!

It's animal fat!

The sepoy in Meerut rose in rebellion. It was the 10th of May, 1857.

You've no escape! Nobody'll come to your help.



Imprison them!

The sepoy mutiny spread like wildfire.



Come on, Dilli chalo! Alert the sepoy in other camps!

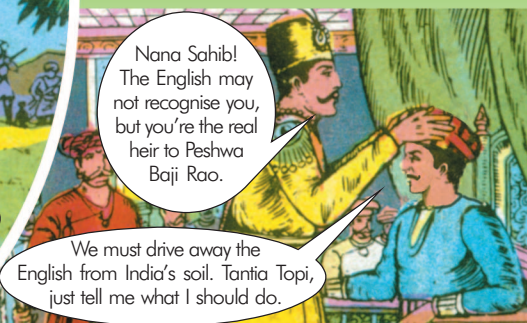
Tell them the English have been thrown out!

On reaching the Red Fort in Delhi, the mutineers proclaimed Bahadur Shah Zafar, the Mughal ruler, as emperor.



I'm with you! Let's pack off the English army from here.

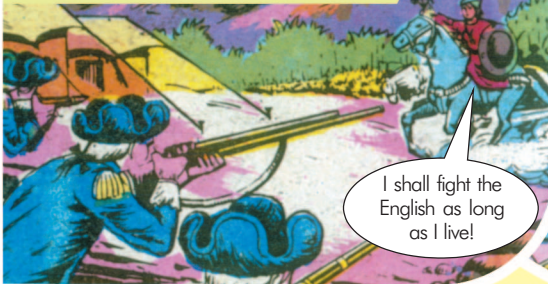
Meanwhile, Bithur witnessed a coronation ceremony...



Nana Sahib! The English may not recognise you, but you're the real heir to Peshwa Baji Rao.

We must drive away the English from India's soil. Tantia Topi, just tell me what I should do.

In Jhansi, the widowed Rani Lakshmi Bai was angry because the English had refused to recognise her adopted son as the heir to the throne.



I shall fight the English as long as I live!

The English captives in Jhansi were treated with respect.



Gentlemen! I'm warning you! We must be allowed to follow our tradition, our laws. Let your bosses in England understand that!

The Rani was caught unawares when General Hugh Rose swooped down on Jhansi. His cannons pounded the fort. Before it fell to the crafty General, Lakshmi Bai escaped, with her infant son strapped to her back.



I'll fight back and recapture the fort!

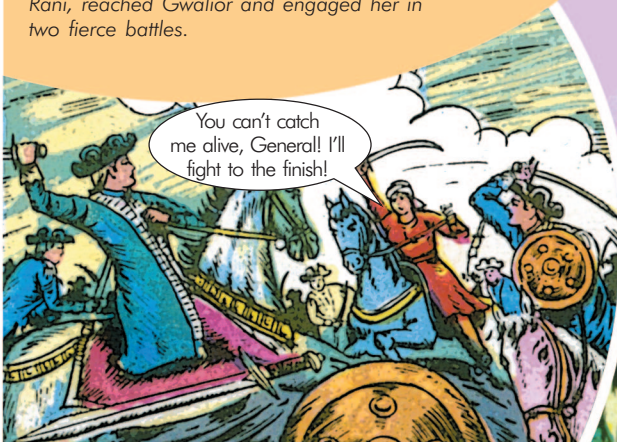
Help reached the Rani when Tantia Topi joined her at Gwalior.



What a shame! The Scindia has fled the fort to join his English friends.

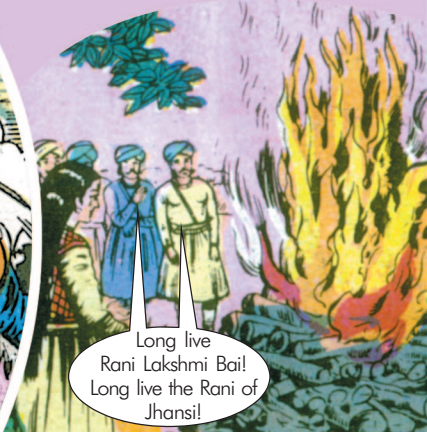
But his army is with us. We'll soon rout the English troops.

General Hugh Rose, who had followed the Rani, reached Gwalior and engaged her in two fierce battles.



You can't catch me alive, General! I'll fight to the finish!

Wounded, the Rani retired to a nearby garden where she breathed her last. It was the 17th of June, 1858.



Long live Rani Lakshmi Bai! Long live the Rani of Jhansi!



This story happened at a time when there were people who used to make a living by giving advice. Not that they do not exist today; only they have other names.

Two friends Gyanesh and Dharmesh lived in a town called Jhumarnagar. Both used to make a living by giving advice. The only difference was, while Gyanesh used to complicate matters, Dharmesh, a practical and level-headed man, would solve matters easily and simply. Both were approached by people to solve their day to day problems. People preferred going to Dharmesh as things would be easily understood by him and, most importantly, explained simply.

Gyanesh was very proud of his wisdom and wise words; he believed, only people with superior knowledge would approach him, and that Dharmesh attracted only simple-

minded people. Actually, the truth was that only those who were desperate and could not find anyone else would approach Gyanesh. He would get on to sermonizing and lecturing, by the end of which the person would be so confused that he would have a new problem in hand! Eventually, they would all land up in Dharmesh's house. So, slowly Gyanesh's reputation began to fall and he drew few and fewer number of customers.

One evening as Gyanesh was about to retire to bed, a goblin appeared before him. He was frightened at first, but the goblin reassured him: "Don't worry, I haven't come to harm you. Only to ask you some advice."

Gyanesh felt flattered; even in the goblin world he was famous. So what, if mortals had not recognized his talents?

"So, what's your problem, Goblin sir?" Gyanesh asked.

“Nothing important; only that I can’t make up my mind whether I should give you a pot of gold or not!” the goblin said with a smile.

Gyanesh was baffled at first, then he thought, surely the goblin was up to some trick; so he replied: “Well, sir, it depends on two things; first whether you deem it fit to give me the gold and second whether I am fit to receive the gold. If it’s the first, then you’ve to know that parting from one’s gold can be a very painful feeling. But as you are not a human, you really don’t need the gold. So keeping this fact in mind, I presume you could give me the gold. But, again, we are faced with a difficult choice. Why in the first place must you give me this gold? Do I deserve all the gold? Blah, blah ...” He went on and on without even taking a pause for breath.

The goblin by now was so bored that he screamed, “Enough! I asked you a simple question and you give me a complicated reply. You definitely

don’t deserve the gold.” So saying, the goblin disappeared.

Gyanesh was left confused. After all, hadn’t he given the most wonderful advice in his whole life? Surely, it deserved a pot of gold!

The next morning he met Dharmesh and recounted him his experience. Dharmesh was most surprised, because a similar goblin had gone to him and posed a similar problem. So, what was Dharmesh’s reply, Gyanesh was eager to know.

“I simply said, it was not for me to decide whether he should give me the gold. After all, it belonged to him! The goblin was quite impressed and when I opened my cupboard in the morning, surely there was a potful of gold!”

Gyanesh began wailing. If only he had thought simply and given a straightforward reply, he would have been richer by a potful of gold! He realized his folly and swore not to complicate any issues in future!





The good earth

*A*t the foot of the Himalayas, in a narrow pass, lived a hill tribe, a thousand years ago. They reared buffaloes and grew vegetables. That kept them happily occupied.

But as time passed, it became hard for them to tend the buffaloes and grow vegetables. That was because stones small and big came sliding down the hills and filled up the entire pass. There was hardly a stretch of land without stones and boulders.

Since the animals could not be fed properly and vegetables did not grow well, the people began to feel restless. One day, the youths of the community went to their old leader and said: “Sir! We think it is time we left this place. Please allow us to go in search of a suitable place

where we can move to.”

The old leader looked pensive. He said: “But how can we leave this place? Our ancestors have died and become one with the earth here. If we move over to some other place, even our way of life might change!”

“Isn’t a change in our way of life preferable to a miserable existence on a dead place?” argued the youths.

“Dead place? Who said it is dead?” exclaimed the leader and, stooping down, he removed a big stone. “Look here, see for yourselves how fine the earth is. How can you call this good earth dead?” asked the leader.

“No doubt the earth under the stones is good enough. But there are stones and stones—thousands of them—scattered all over the pass.

Who can remove them? Better we find out some new place to live,” insisted the young men.

“Let’s wait. I will pray to our goddess and ask for Her decision,” said the leader.

Next day, in the evening, the leader called a meeting of all the members of the tribe and announced: “Last night the goddess commanded me to inform you that she would like us to build an impressive temple for her. And around the temple we should build houses for ourselves.”

Such a message from the goddess inspired everybody. They busied themselves in gathering the scattered stones. The leader made a sketch for



the temple providing for a high platform. A large quantity of stones was necessary to complete the construction.

Thereafter, the leader asked the people to build their houses around the temple. More stones were collected and put to use.

When the houses, too, had been built, it was seen that no single stone lay anywhere in the area. Soon the earth looked green with grass and vegetables. The difficulties the tribe felt till then disappeared. Nobody thought of moving to some other place any more. Happy and satisfied, they worshipped the goddess with devotion.

August 2001





A Golden Touch

Motilal was the leading merchant of Vikrampur. He had an only son whom he named Sohanlal. Till he grew up, his father's only wish was that the boy should know of only joy and happiness and he should not suffer from any want. He earned a lot and spent a lot for his son. He also saved a lot, so that Sohanlal had enough and more to lead a life of comfort. Sohanlal, much to the satisfaction of his father, grew up to be a fine youth.

As years went by, old age caught up with Motilal and he fell ill. One day, he feared that his end was near, and so he called his son to his bedside and said: "Sohan, I'm afraid I may not live long. I'm leaving all my wealth to you so that you'll lead a happy life. I've only one wish for you—that whatever you touch should turn gold!" In the next few moments, Motilal breathed his last.

Sohanlal was grief stricken for some days. Later, he started attending to his father's business. Wonder of

wonders! The business prospered beyond his expectations. Whatever product he chose for trading brought him only gains and more gains. He attributed all his success to his father's blessings.

Somehow, he was bothered by a nagging thought. Was it really proper and advisable to make huge profit and just increase one's wealth? Would the business one day collapse without his realising it? He thought and thought how he could reduce profit. One method that came to his mind was, he would sell his goods at low prices which would automatically reduce the profit he was making on each item. When the other traders came to know about his, they ridiculed his strategy, while some of the elders among his relatives and friends cautioned him against such an unwise step. Sohanlal did not pay any heed to their advice for some time.

One of the items that he traded in was dates. They were in great demand

in Vikramapur where a high price prevailed. Sohanlal decided that he would not upset the market by cutting down its price in Vikramapur. He arranged for dates to be taken to the neighbouring kingdom of Manavnagar where he sold it at a very low price.

The traders of Manavnagar were taken by surprise. They feared they might have to close down their shops if a trader from another kingdom could freely carry on business in their territory. They went to their king and requested him to take action against Sohanlal.

The king summoned Sohanlal to his presence. When he was brought to him, the king was surprised to see a young man before him. He asked him: "Who are you? Who gave you permission to carry on trade in my kingdom? Besides, are you crazy carrying on trade to incur loss and not make any profit?"

Sohanlal was not upset by the king's angry outburst. "Your Majesty," he said calmly, "my father had left me with a lot of wealth. After his death I managed his business to the best of my ability and it had brought a lot of

profit. My father had blessed me that whatever I touched would turn gold. That is what is happening now. I now feel that the time has come to share my earnings with the people."

"Somehow I can't believe all that you say," remarked the king.

"Wait a moment, your majesty," said Sohanlal, and he pulled out something from his pocket. "Your majesty, as I was walking from the palace gates, I saw something glittering covered by dust. I picked it up, and I saw that it is a ring!" He then rubbed it clean with his fingers and handed it to the king.

"Why! It is my signet ring!" said the king. "It was missing for the last one month. In fact, I had even announced that I would give the hand of my daughter to whoever would find it. I'm going to keep my word, young man. Now I can believe that you have fully lived up to your father's wishes."

In the next few days, the princess was given in marriage to Sohanlal, who shifted from Vikramapur to Manavnagar, where in due course he succeeded the king to the throne.



Nothing to do with a horse's colour!

- ❁ *Reader Niranjana Sen of Patna wants to know the meaning of the idiom 'a horse of a different colour'.*

Here's a situation. Mohan was held up with his homework and was late in reaching the playground where Raja and Giri were choosing their teams for a game of football. He overheard their argument and Raja was angry that his goal-keeper had not yet turned up. As Mohan had no idea of the earlier part of the argument, he asked: "Are you referring to Manoj (his bosom friend)?" Raja turned around and said: "Manoj? He's a horse of a different colour!" Meanwhile Prasad came rushing, and Raja pulled him up: "Why are you so late?" Presumably, Prasad was the goalie in Raja's team. After the game, Mohan and Giri were walking together to their colony, when he asked him: "What did Raja mean by a horse of a different colour?" "Oh! that? It simply means, something entirely different," explained Giri.

- ❁ *What is the meaning of the expression 'pot luck'? asks Aishwarya Nagaraj of Coonoor.*

Imagine your two wheeler had conked off and it was quite late into the night and you would have to leave the vehicle on the road to pick it up next day. And there came a couple in their car, they stopped to give you a lift, and the woman invited you to share their dinner, but warned you as you all got out of the car: "You'll have to take pot luck, Thambi (younger brother)", and you wondered what she meant by it. However, when you three sat at the table, she added: "Nothing special, you'll have to eat whatever I've cooked, whatever is in the pot!" To take (one's) pot luck is an informal way of saying, one has to take a chance and accept whatever is given, without any knowledge of either the quality or the quantity! Depends on *your* luck, more than the pot's!

- ❁ *What does 'go to Halifax' mean? asks Vasudev Deshpande of Bhuj.*

If someone were to tell you that, and in an angry mood, don't tarry awhile to ask him what he means by it. Make yourself scarce and get back home. He is only giving some respectability to the more common expression 'go to hell'!



★ **What is the connection between old age and grey hair?**

-Ramnarain, Adilabad.

The colour of the hair comes from a substance known as melanin, which also gives colour to the skin and protects it from the sun. As ageing takes place, less amount of melanin is produced. So, when a person becomes old, the hair loses its colour which changes from black to grey. Sometimes this happens even before one becomes old.

★ **What is the origin of playing cards?**

-Sridhara Menon, Mavelikara.

At one time, Chinese currency notes were looking like playing cards and people believed that playing cards are of Chinese origin. One thing is certain, playing cards did exist in China a thousand years ago. There is another view that the Egyptians had playing cards long before they became common in China. Yet another belief is, fortune-tellers used cards of the size that we know of. Similar cards were made for gambling. The French were the first to create a “deck” of 52 cards, including those with pictures of King, Queen, and Jack.

★ **Horses are known to sleep while standing. How is this possible?**

-Brinda Hegde, Mangalore.

As horses become easy prey to wild animals in their usual habitat, they have over thousands of years learnt to stay upright even while sleeping. If they lie down, they become more vulnerable than while standing. Nowadays, horses no longer live in the wild. They are caught and domesticated for service in the army and police, and to draw vehicles. As such they are protected from being preyed upon. They can still “fall” asleep without falling down!

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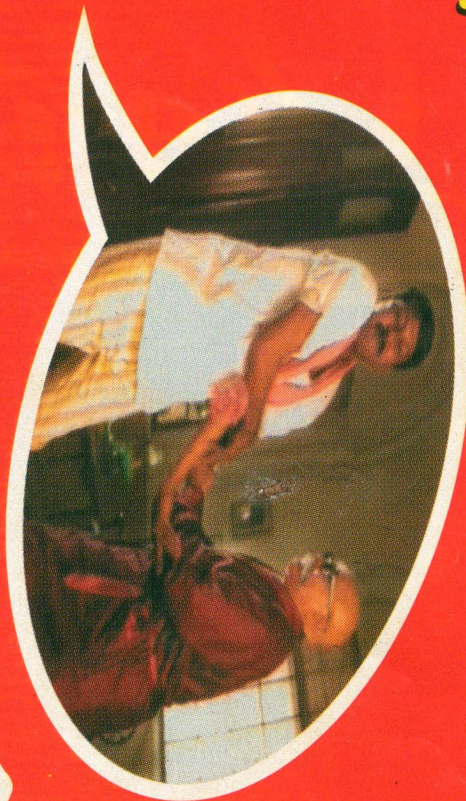
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